

# Dyslexic Advantage

## NEWSLETTER

### DYSLEXIA AS AN EXPLORATORY ADVANTAGE



- BEYOND READING ALOUD
- READING BUT NOT WRITING
- BACK TO SCHOOL TIPS
- NEUROLEARNING SCREENER
- DYSLEXIA NEWS



Fernette Eide MD, Editor

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Thanks to Shelley Wear, Trish Seres, Michelle Williams, Dayna Russell Freudenthal. and new additions Cheryl Kane, Meryl McQueen, and Jack Martin. Thanks to Lady Grace Belarmino for design and layout and Andi and Freshea for their social media and admin help!



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

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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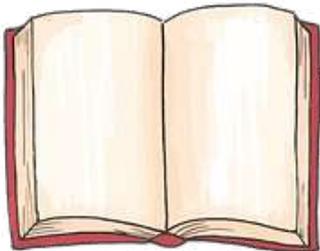
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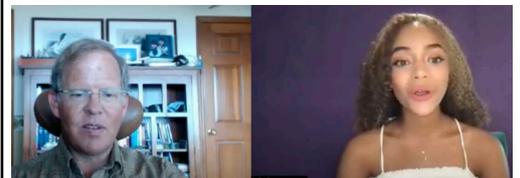
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# EXPLORATION

## DYSLEXIA AS AN EVOLUTIONARY ADVANTAGE

**Dyslexia is not a neurological disorder or even an impairment, but rather a concession for having cognitive strengths in exploration, big-picture thinking, creativity, and problem-solving that have contributed to human survival amid changing environments. This insight comes from a new study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* that finds an association between the learning difference and “an explorative bias.”**

- **Additude Magazine**, on the recent paper by Taylor and Westergaard

Cambridge scholars Helen Taylor and Martin David Vestergaard are shaking up the world with their article, [Developmental Dyslexia: Disorder or Specialization in Exploration?](#) In just a week, the article already had more views than 98% of all *Frontiers* articles.

I've begun to do a deep dive in our Premium magazines, but one of the reasons this comprehensive analysis is so satisfying is that it goes both deep and wide in dyslexia literature - something that too many researchers and clinical experts haven't been able to do. It also puts forth a compelling theory that dyslexia has an essential importance to humankind because dyslexic people have exploratory strengths that can help our species adapt to changing conditions and find ways to thrive.

From the paper:

"Developmental dyslexia is defined as “a disorder in children who, despite conventional classroom experience, fail to attain the language skills of reading, writing and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities” (World Federation of Neurology, 1968)...this long-standing deficit-centric view provides an incomplete picture...Nearly forty years ago, Norman Geschwind noted an increasing number of studies suggesting that those with Developmental

Wed, Jul 06, 2022

Newsweek

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## TECH &amp; SCIENCE

# Dyslexia Helped Evolutionary Survival of Humans, Research Suggests

 BY [SIMONA KITANOVSKA, ZENGER NEWS](#) ON 6/27/22 AT 9:22 AM EDT

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## Study: Dyslexia Is Not a Neurological Disorder But an Evolutionary Survival Trait

July 5, 2022

Dyslexia is not a neurological disorder or even an impairment, but rather a concession for having cognitive strengths in exploration, big-picture thinking, creativity, and problem-solving that have contributed to human survival amid changing environments. This insight comes from a new study published in *Frontiers in Psychology* that finds an association between



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## INSPIRATION

Dyslexia have superior talents in certain non-verbal skills that relate to art, architecture, engineering, and athletics. He was first to highlight a likely evolutionary basis for the differences observed..."

After an exhaustive broad and deep analytical review of diverse scholarly literature, the authors come to these conclusions:

**"The explorative bias for people with Developmental Dyslexia can be seen at multiple levels of analysis. Proposed strengths cluster around explorative behaviors such as big-picture, long-term thinking, and inventiveness."**

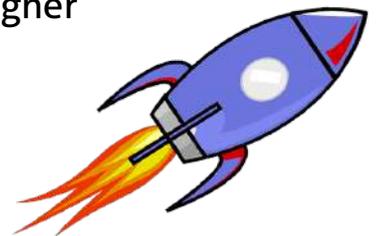
If you are academically-inclined, do read this paper for its outstanding and compelling analysis of the data regarding dyslexia.

A wide-spread problem in the field of dyslexia is the existence of silo-ed expertise. Reading specialists may not study and deeply understand dyslexia from anything other than a reading perspective (including writing, memory, mathematics, foreign languages learning, etc.), and scientists who conduct basic scientific research may be removed from dyslexia from educational or clinical perspectives - certain over the course of the life span.

But having both wide and deep knowledge of dyslexia is just what this field and this community needs!

To date, we've often found the people who understand dyslexia the best have had a personal connection to dyslexia themselves, and then received additional training in neuroscience, psychology, education or understand more deeply and help others.

Our hope is that academia will look more deeply into the implications of this work so that it can become the foundation for a better education for all dyslexic students in K-12 and higher education.



# TIPS FOR HEADING BACK TO SCHOOL WITH DYSLEXIA

## Q: How Do I Help My Student Go Back to School?

For many students, it will be a relief getting back to school because of all the disruptions in the past. Teachers, principals, and administrators are aware of the impact of the pandemic and school disruptions over the past 2 1/2 years.

Returning to school after summer is often difficult for a majority of dyslexic students, but hopefully as teachers and schools find their footing, there will be a greater ease into school than might be seen before the pandemic.

### PREVIEW THE NEW ROUTINE

If your student has been "sleeping in" over the summer, try to reset the week before school starts to get their internal clock set ahead of time. If your student is moving up to a larger school, think about walking the campus (if it's allowed) and helping them get an idea of the layout where things will be.

### CHECK IN WITH OTHER PARENTS AND STUDENTS

Talk with other parents and encourage your student to contact their friends to have better supports when problems arise, or study partners. You may be able to set up informal note-taking co-ops without the formal process of obtaining an IEP or 504.

### TOUCHING BASE WITH THE TEACHER OR TEACHERS BEFORE THE START

If it's possible, touch base with the teacher before school starts to get a reading list where you can request audiobooks or ebooks that can be read.

Both [Bookshare](#) and [Learning Ally](#) have the option of requesting a book that isn't yet available on their site - but even if that book can be converted to an e-book or that can be read aloud by text-to-speech or recorded book, the process may take weeks to months.

## PRACTICE INTRODUCTIONS AND WRITE 'THE LETTER'

No matter what the age, your student may benefit by practicing how to introduce themselves to their teacher or teachers. They don't have to remember everything. A short introduction could be something like, "Hi, Mrs / Miss / Mr X, I'm (name) and I just wanted to introduce myself. I'm dyslexic (or if they prefer, I have dyslexia) and here's what I think I'll need to be successful in your class." If they're



on an IEP or 504 they can mention it. If you use something like a app for reading or writing, scanning pen, or assistive technology like they can bring it and show the teacher how it works if they would like to see it.

Be aware that some teachers may have up to 50% of their students on IEPs or 504s, so it may be difficult handling the sheer numbers of requests for accommodations, but the letter and personal introduction will help them remember your and what they say they needed. For your student's part, they should get acquainted with the technology and practice and learn it so that they can use it seamlessly in class when the need arises.

Even if school has already started, the letter and personal introduction is a good idea. Middle and high school teachers may have 100+ new students they teach at the beginning of the school year, and it may take them a while to know each student and their needs.

Include your student's photo in with the letter.

## STAY POSITIVE

Without a doubt, there can be many stresses for students heading back to school, but also many positives as well. If you're reading this article on behalf of a dyslexic student, then you've already succeeded in terms of having your student identified.

There is a strong late-blooming profile for dyslexics, but the upside of this is once identified, and hopefully remediated and supported, the strengths get stronger and more widely appreciated as weaknesses and challenges recede.

Teachers have a difficult job as the pandemic still doesn't quite burn out; work with your teachers and encourage your student to be pro-active and positive.

If you're a student in college, you may not be aware how many other students are receiving accommodations, but in some schools, the numbers are 25-50%!

Many students (and adults) may feel ambivalent about requesting accommodations for themselves, but if a fellow student needed extra time to read through questions and answer them, they probably would be more understanding.

The implications of the previous article discussing the evolutionary advantages of being dyslexic are that we as a global community should be finding more opportunities for dyslexic people to work on difficult problems, not less. Accommodations and supports are part of this process.

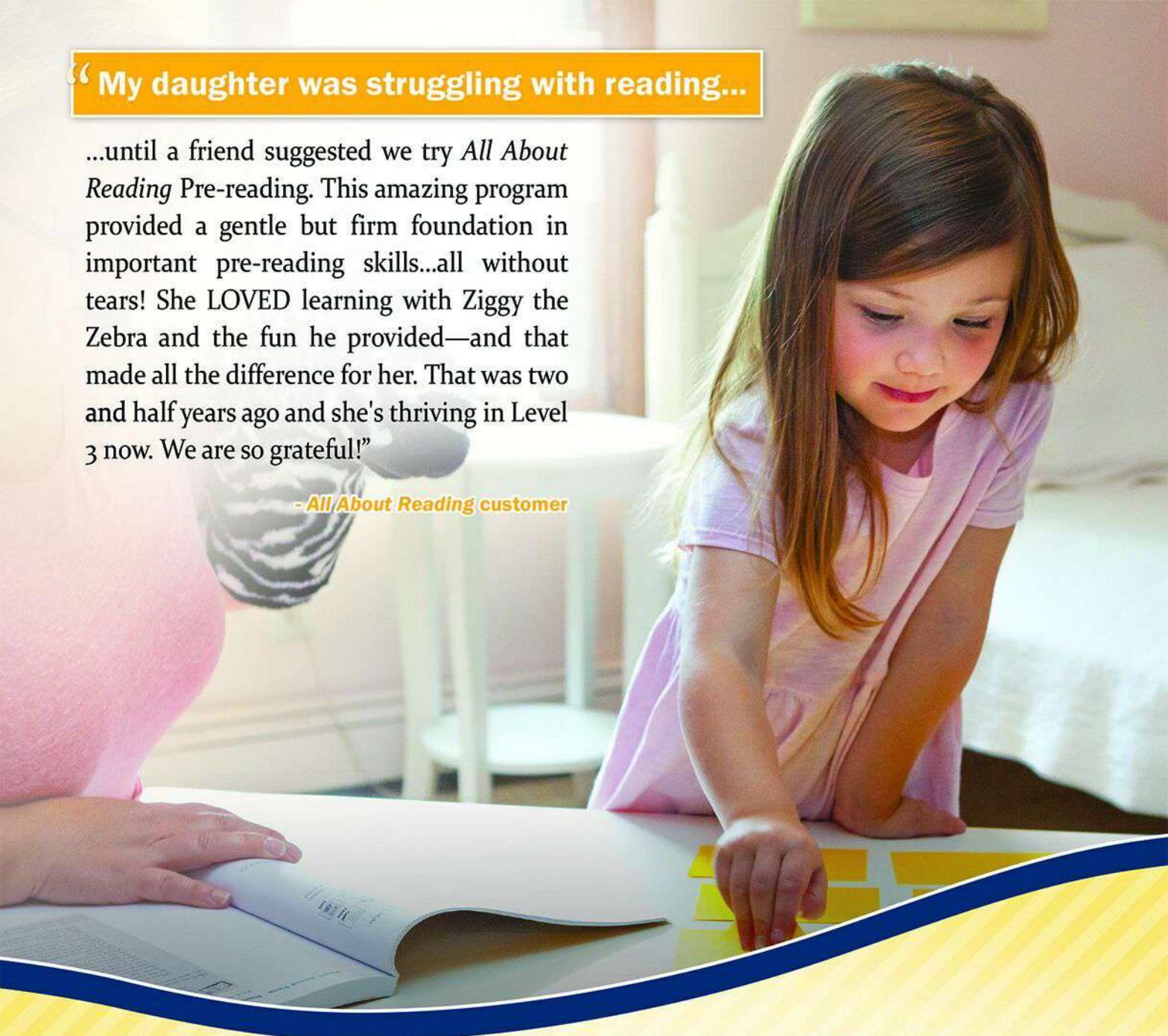


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## **Q: How can I tell that students are dyslexic if they're not reading aloud?**

Last week a high school teacher in my **course** asked how she might be able to tell that a student may be dyslexic if they don't read out loud in her class.

Once a student moves into upper elementary school and beyond, reading aloud becomes less frequent and if dyslexia has not yet been identified (studies suggest as many as 3 out of 4 students are missed), then the chances that dyslexia will be formally recognized becomes even more unlikely.

When reading aloud (in a small group or 1:1 situation), students may read dysfluently with pauses when trying to decode words and misread words that bear little resemblance to target words, revealing their uncertainty about sounding out or common phonetic rules. Bright unremediated dyslexics may fill-in words based on context so well, that they may be even harder to identify in the workings of a busy classroom.

## **KNOWLEDGE > TESTS AND WRITTEN WORK**

A common way that dyslexia can present is with a gap between what dyslexic students know and what they can easily show through writing or even test-taking. There may be several reasons for this, but some reasons include - needing more time for tests and misreading test questions, and writing and spelling difficulties, and difficulty accessing all the information presented in classes and readings.

Students may comprehend material well, be analytical and creative, but their grades and test scores underestimate their ability.

Students who haven't been formally identified are missing out on receiving supports like audiobooks and ebooks that can be read aloud through software. Most dyslexic students will have difficulty note-taking, so they may also miss important information unless teachers' notes are posted online or they can get copies of notes from a friend.

Many dyslexic students also have dysgraphia (writing disability dysgraphic and dyscalculic, so knowing how the of writing) and dyscalculia (math disability), which may also affect writing-heavy courses, science, and math.

With the pandemic disruptions, dyslexic students may have had even more disruptions to their learning progress.

Writing can be a strong indicator of dyslexia, if one learns what to look for. Dyslexic students may show letters written with irregular shapes and sizes (impaired letter writing automaticity), problems with capitalization, punctuation, and grammar, and phonemic and sight word spelling errors (learn more about this in our Dyslexia Library under [Dysgraphia](#)).

Younger writers have the most difficult time and are especially susceptible to working memory overload. If a student is still having considerable difficulty with reversals and the spelling of common words, then breakdown tasks into little bits, like having brainstorming one day, then sentence writing another. Allow students to dictate or work with a speech-to-text program if necessary. Allow typing when needed and have students learn handwriting as a separate task.

## DYSLEXIC STRENGTHS

What about dyslexic strengths? Some strengths may be evident in young children, but others may be later blooming. For some in this field, dyslexia may be recognized by the MIND strengths described in our [book](#), *The Dyslexic Advantage*, but also an exploratory bias as described recently in the research paper by [Taylor and Vestergaard, 2022](#). Many of the particular gifts of dyslexic individuals comes from activities and skills outside the classroom.

## CHOOSING NOT TO DISCLOSE



### Q: ADVICE FOR A STUDENT WHO DOES NOT WANT TO DISCLOSE IN HIGH SCHOOL?

It is very common for people to want to choose whether they want to formally disclose their dyslexia, and to whom. This may change over the years and of course depending on particular contexts.

#### WHY DOES A STUDENT CHOOSE NOT TO DISCLOSE IN HIGH SCHOOL?

Some students may choose not to disclose as they move into their high school years because they feel as if they have become successful in remediating the most difficult steps of reading and want to free themselves from supports. Others might be outgrowing their need for an IEP and not want to attend pull-out supports once they transition to high school.

It might be that students are outgrowing their need for special education as they enter high school, but at the same time, students should be aware that they could put themselves in difficult situations if they haven't disclosed and then begin having difficulties.

#### GREATER DEMANDS IN READING, WRITING, MEMORIZATION, MATH, FOREIGN LANGUAGE STUDY

The greatest worry with students deciding to not disclose as they make a big education jump (like middle school to high school) is that they don't really appreciate the changes that they might encounter in high school that can make their educational needs greater and not less. In high school, the reading becomes more complex - with longer words and complex sentence and essay structures. The writing demands increase in all subjects, not just English, and memorization demands and homework may increase dramatically.

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**Michelle Lucas, M.Ed., AT**



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## DISCLOSING IN HIGH SCHOOL

Some students are able to do well, waiving accommodations and special education in high school; if problems arise, students can try to apply for accommodations after the school year has started, but they might be sent to the back of a waitlist for testing - and not be assessed until the second part of the year. Low grades in the 9th grade are not insurmountable obstacles for higher education - especially as admissions committees recognize how common it is to have students who have trouble adjusting to demands in 9th grade. As long as grades improve, their options for higher education are often still wide open.

### POTENTIAL PROBLEMS FROM FAILURE TO DISCLOSE IN HIGH SCHOOL

Potential problems that may arise are troubles getting back in the system and failing to qualify for accommodations for high stakes college entrance exams. A college counselor needs to check a box on a form to the College Board and ACT saying whether a student applying for accommodations has been receiving accommodations for high school tests; if accommodations are not in place in school, then it may be much harder to get them for college entrance exams. College entrance exams are also much harder to take for many dyslexic students because the information presented is not within the context of a class or lectures; there may be little flexibility in interpreting questions and answers.

A low GPA may also disqualify students from college sports (NCAA) and college scholarships.

All of these difficulties are not insurmountable for students - but may delay students' plans and add time to reach their career goals. If some students get poor grades, it may increase their stress and disengagement from school.

### SWITCHING FROM IEP TO 504

If students no longer require pull-out instruction in high school, but might benefit by extra time for tests, audiobooks or ebooks, and assistive technology. Most dyslexic students require accommodations in order for test-taking and writing work to match the level of their learning an intellectual ability. Some individuals require accommodations life-long; while others may not require them in their twenties.

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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.

## DISCLOSING IN HIGH SCHOOL

### TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHY YOUR STUDENT DOES NOT WANT TO DISCLOSE

Why does your student not want to disclose? Do they have a feeling that they have outgrown the need to disclose or receive accommodations? Are there peer issues or a desire to change what supports they were receiving in middle school? Talk over the issue with your student and consider consulting with a tutor or academic coach.

### STUDENTS CAN START WITHOUT ACCOMMODATIONS - BUT ACT QUICKLY IF PROBLEMS ARISE

The desire for change might be uncovering something important that could be changed, but the change also does not need to be all-or-none. If student has accommodations "on file", they may not require extra time or other accommodations for a course depending on what is being asked of them for assignments and tests, but have can request them if suddenly the need arises.

For instance, if suddenly test questions are difficult to process for an advanced English class, it's easier to meet with a teacher after a test that a student hasn't been able to finish - and ask to be allowed extra time in a free period or after school.

The only thing that may be involved with the accommodation process in high school is meeting with a school psychologist, providing copies of records, and telling them what you need in school to be successful. The same packet can be given to classroom teachers at the beginning of the school year - and if students feel as if they would like to take their courses without accommodations, then they can start that way. It will be easier to ask for accommodations if the need suddenly arises. We actually advise doing this (filing for an IEP or 504 at the beginning of the school year, but not necessarily requesting accommodations from a teacher) vs. not making any disclosures. This may provide the greatest flexibility, but also a safety net if needs arise in the new demands of high school.

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# READERS WHO DON'T WRITE

Brock and I were recently talking with our friend, [Dr. Nicole Swedberg](#) about how she came to focus in writing for dyslexic students when so many focus almost exclusively on helping students with reading. It was after finishing her advanced degree and training in several top structured literacy programs that she started working with a student who had finished many such programs and was a remediated reader.

Although reading was now on grade-level, he couldn't write! As an older student, too, so much of schooling was funneling into writing, that he was developing secondary problems like anxiety and work avoidance.

## REMIEDIATING THE READING BUT NOT THE WRITING

As she soon discovered, this student was the tip of an iceberg.

It's surprisingly common for schools and programs to put a disproportionate amount of effort into reading and not writing. Orton-Gillingham / structured literacy programs vary widely in terms of how much writing they require - and when writing is expected to occur depending on how many levels of curricula have been completed.

So a student can be dutifully working through multiple levels of a "good" curriculum, and master the code of reading, but not be able to write!

Even today with all the emphasis on new dyslexia laws, if you look closely at what is being mandated, the laws almost always only mention reading. This is a mistake.

## WRITING IS NECESSARY FOR ALL LEVELS OF EDUCATION

Many dyslexic students also have dysgraphia ("disorder of written expression"), but it's much less mentioned by name in IEPs and 504s and many students fail to receive supports or specific interventions for it.



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## WRITING

Without technology, students who want to write must reach a certain level of phonemic awareness before written work closely represents their ideas. Some students may be able to defer writing until this time, but others will struggle mightily and parents and teachers run the risk of these students disengaging from the educational process all together.

### USING TECHNOLOGY WITH WRITING REMEDIATION

I remember talking to one of the directors at Landmark College before they had thoroughly integrated their college with assistive technology. Years ago, they had had a long-standing practice of prioritizing remediation over technology, but then they had a student with "severe dyslexia" who pleaded to be allowed to use technology - and they agreed and saw what a dramatic difference it made in his over-all performance and outlook at the college as well as his writing ability. In the end, his experience caused them to change their whole program of writing and integrate technology throughout curriculum for all students.

For the youngest children, allowing them dictate their ideas or use dictation apps (sometimes these best suited to older students) may happen first before typing with a software like [Grammarly](#), [Co-Writer](#), [Ginger](#), or [Word Tune](#).

Nicole told us that she does all of her remote writing tutoring with [Google Docs](#). Google docs is free and used as a collaboration tool. When a student is working with a remote tutor, they can see what the other sees as sentences are being typed. It is possible for students to learn how to type with their voice in Google docs. There is a built-in spellchecker, grammar checker, dictionary, and thesaurus, and a tutoring with a student can provide on-the-spot support with grammar while students are writing.

There is no reason why writing should be neglected in dyslexia; writing is often a greater challenge than reading once students move out of lower elementary school.



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## October Is Dyslexia Awareness Month

Scanning Pens is a proud supporter of the global campaign **Go Red For Dyslexia**. It aims to change the narrative for people with dyslexia and other neurodiverse differences- they want to raise awareness, end the stigma, and show the world all the amazing things people who are neurodiverse can do!

The campaign focus for 2022 is inclusivity, which means celebrating and helping the people who are building the foundations for a better, more accessible tomorrow. That means lighting up even more of the world up in red, applauding even more incredible achievements, and providing our global neurodiversity community with the resources they need to put positive change at the heart of what they do.

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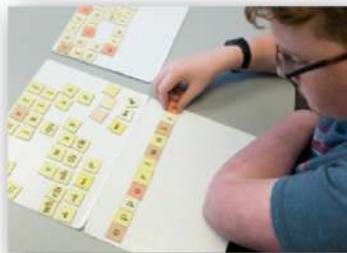
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## **Dyslexia Not a Disorder but Supporter of Evolutionary Survival**

**Additude**



## **All Hands on Deck: Special Educator Shortage**

**K12 Dive**



## **Indiana Dyslexia Law May Be Model for Federal**

**WIBC**



## **Tips: How I Approach interviews**

**British Dyslexia Association**



## **Accommodations for Digital Learning - Details Matter**

**MCSchneiderPhD.org**



## **Dyslexia is My Superpower - Richard Branson**

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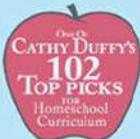
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[www.summitcenter.us](http://www.summitcenter.us)

[info@summitcenter.us](mailto:info@summitcenter.us)



*“Summit Center helped me find out I am both dyslexic -- and smart. I just think differently. Now I like school, and I have the tools I need to succeed.”*

# JULIA ON DYSLEXIA SCREENING DR BROCK EIDE ON THE NEUROLEARNING APP



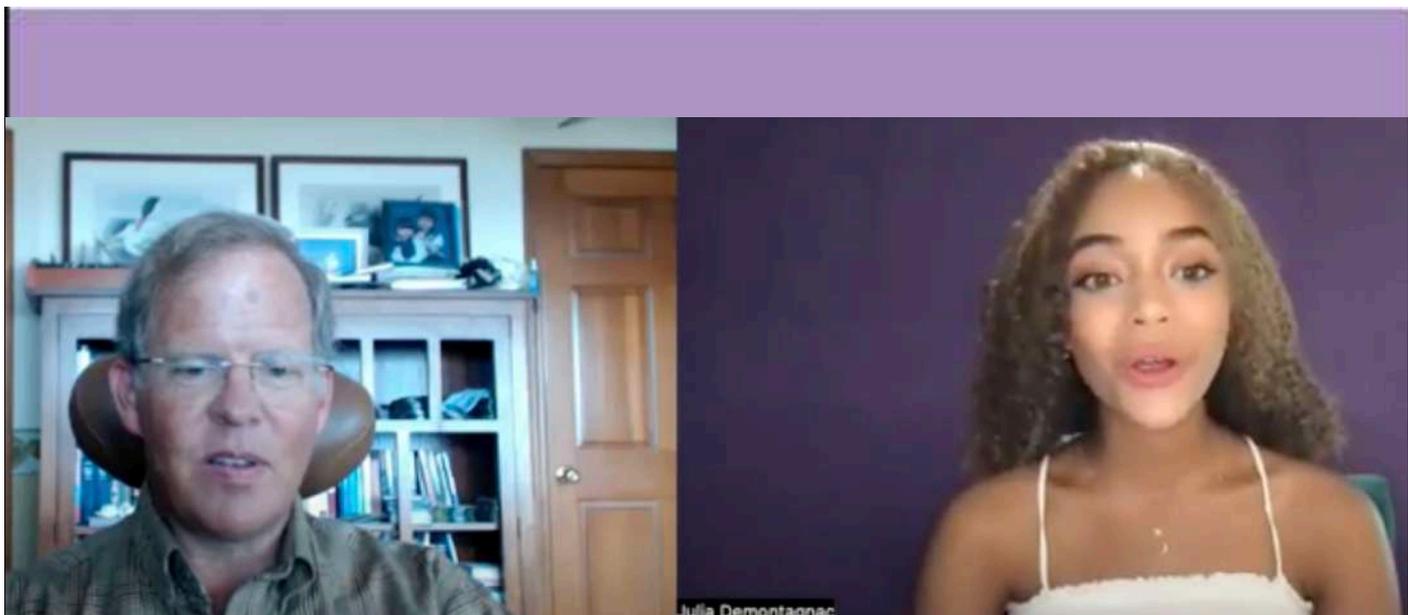
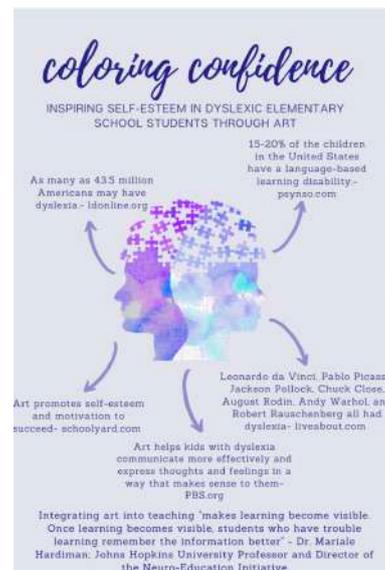
**NeuroLearning**  
A Social Purpose Corporation

Dyslexia Screening Test App

Last week, empassioned high school student, Julia Demontagnac interviewed Dr. Brock Eide (Dyslexic Advantage co-founder) about his creation of the **Neurolearning Dyslexia Screener**.

I will share my interview with Julia in our next newsletter, but briefly, Julia is on a mission to inspire self-esteem in dyslexic elementary school students through art.

Check out her website at **ColoringConfidence.com**



PREMIUM ISSUE SEVENTY-EIGHT JUNE 2022

# Dyslexic Advantage PREMIUM MAGAZINE



## TAMING THE MONKEY MIND

- GRIT AND RESILIENCE
- POOR OUTCOMES LONG TERM OUTCOMES READING RECOVERY
- ROGUE HERO SAS FOUNDER DAVID STIRLING
- MANAGING MATH
- PAUSING WHILE WRITING

# PREMIUM



- Taming the Monkey Mind
- Grit and Resilience
- Founder of the Special Air Service
- Reading Recovery Curriculum
- Managing Math
- Pausing While Writing

**SUBSCRIBE**

It's just  
\$5 per month!

## Homeschooling Dyslexia Online Course for Parents

Includes 1 Year  
Access to a Private  
Q & A Forum

Reading, Writing,  
Math, Technology



# DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE PREMIUM SUBSCRIPTION



August 2021 Premium



July 2021 Premium



June 2021 Premium TECH



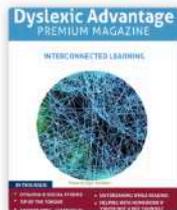
May 2021 Premium



April 2021



March 2021



February 2021



January 2021

## THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE RESOURCE FOR DYSLEXIA

- Parents
- Teachers and Professionals
- Adults with Dyslexia

**SUBSCRIBE**

## SUPPORT DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE

We need your help! The economy has affected this community and Dyslexic Advantage.

You can donate **HERE**.

Or send a check to Dyslexic Advantage  
6701 139th Pl SW Edmonds WA  
98026-3223. Thank you!

See if your company may have a charity matching program.

We're also part of **Amazon Smile!**





"You are only as big as the dreams you dare to live."

- Jessica Watson (at 16, youngest person to sail solo, non-stop, around the world)