Dyslexic Advantage NEWSLETTER



- GO RED FOR DYSLEXIA
- TEACHING EXCEPTIONS
- BACK TO SCHOOL FORUM
- SMOOTHING SAILING SEPT
- SELF-ESTEEM ELEMENTARY
- DYSLEXIA NEWS

















Fernette Eide MD, Editor



Dyslexic Advantage Needs Your help. Consider a donation HERE.

With inflation and the uncertain economy, Dyslexic Advantage is experiencing financial stress and we are concerned about continuing our much-needed programs.

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Thanks to Shelley Wear, Trish Seres, Michelle Wiliams, Cheryl Kahn, and Jack Martin. Thanks to Lady Grace Belarmino for design and layout and Andi and Freshea for their social media and admin help!

PREMIUM

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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DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE ISSUE 81 SEPTEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER











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DYSLEXIC STRENGTHS IN TIMES OF ADVERSITY

"...dyslexics sometimes seem unusually well suited to deal with major changes -- to being able to see opportunities inside of adversity. They are known to be particularly good at rethinking situations in an original way. They are known to be able to see what others cannot see. They are good at not being stuck with conventional views and conventional solutions. They have trouble reading and memorizing old knowledge -- but they are often really good at creating new knowledge and insights." - Thomas G West

Tom West, author of <u>Seeing What Others Do Not See</u>, <u>In the Mind's Eye</u>, and <u>Thinking Like Einstein</u>, has a wonderful article titled: <u>Dyslexic Strengths in Times of Adversity We thank the</u> <u>DAS</u>, or Dyslexia Association of Singapore for letting us share it here.

In this article, Tom shares his background connection to dyslexia and how he came to understand the particular strengths of dyslexics.

"...dyslexics can be super stars when they discover their special areas of talent -- and when they find the right industry and position to put their talents to use..."

Tom's reminder is timely - not just because of this period of the COVID pandemic and post-pandemic normal, but with additional society pressures like inflation and social and energy crises, the list goes on -it's good for us to remember that chaos and disruptions are times where dyslexic people can really make outsized contributions to their communities and the world at large.

Tom's paper:

"Early on, I realized that many things had been changing in fundamental ways -- many changes that tended to favor dyslexics once again, as they had in the past. I soon realized that all the low-level reading and clerical tasks that dyslexics have difficulty with were becoming less and less important in the world of work. In contrast, the high-level visual thinking talents and skills where dyslexics often excel were becoming more and more



Author Tom West

important in the world of work once again...the dyslexic brain often seemed to be optimized for innovation and original discovery -- aspects especially useful in times of radical change and uncertain threat. "

Think about how this bears true with so many accomplishmed members of this community - whether it was Don Francis discovering the source of Ebola and AIDS John Goodenough revolutionizing the energy industry with his lithium batteries, or Yoky Matsuoka up-ending the design of innovative robotics.

What might start out as being fringe ideas create revolutions in the domains of science, technology, or other types of exploration.

As Tom's article reminds us-going against the grain doesn't come easy - it often means coming under attack and being excluded, but if you recognize this as the balance of changing things, then the difficult parts become easier to bear.



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I was recently watching what might seem to be an unlikely movie for me - World War Z based on a book by dyslexic screenwriter Max Brooks. It's about a zombie apocalypse. I am not at all a person for the horror genre, but I was curious about the story because I had heard that after writing the book, Max had some surprising responses from the real military. From MaxBrooks.com.

"Brooks' ultimate goal was to challenge old ways of thinking and encourage mental agility and flexibility for problem solvers and leaders. Brooks' unique, unconventional thinking depicted in his books has even inspired the U.S. military to examine how they may respond to potential crises in the future. World War Z was read and discussed by the sitting Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Brooks has been invited to speak at a variety of military engagements—from the Naval War College, to the FEMA hurricane drill at San Antonio, to the nuclear "Vibrant Response" wargame.

Adapting to adversity has been the enduring theme in all of Brooks's works. From the true story "The Harlem Hellfighters" which chronicles the heroic African American unit in the trenches of World War 1, to the fiction "Minecraft: The Island" the first official novelization of the 100,000,000+ videogame franchise, Brooks continues to explore what drives us to succeed in a hostile world..."

There are many dyslexic strengths that need to come together in a complex situation like modern war (or a zombie war for that matter). Visualizing possibilities, viewing events from different perspectives, and constantly challenging assumptions are skills that may be especially well-suited to dyslexic people. Dyslexic thinkers may be well-suited to seeing how events can evolve over time and change - and that is why they can be especially valuable in times of crisis or adversity.

In World War Z, Max also introduced his theory of the tenth man (or woman). The principle is that when nine people agree on something, it's the obligation of the tenth man to disagree and plan for the opposite, no matter how improbable an idea it may be. We've seen that as a role that dyslexic people often take in successful creative problem solving groups.

INSPIRATION

In young people, you may see this talent turn up in all sorts of situations, like game simulations, problem solving competitions like Future Problem Solvers of America, or Odyssey of the Mind. This is also a strength that people may never discover if they don't undertake unexpected challenges or they lack the confidence to pursue their ideas in the face of opposition or lack of support.

"I have herd aversion to the point it's ridiculous." - author Vince Flynn

A final example of a tenth man principal or herd aversion, is the New York Times best selling novelist Vince Flynn. Vince was another dyslexic with super D strengths, if you know our MIND strengths acronym (it stands for dynamic reasoning). Vince wrote political thriller novels in addition for working as a story consultant for TV (24 series), but the real world also discovered his abilities and soon he was advising Presidents, the CIA, hedge fund managers, and leaders of foreign countries.

With a crisis comes opportunity.

If you are experiencing adversity right now and you're dyslexic, then don't just accept the crisis. This could be an opportunity and this could be your time. This will be a time when new ideas are needed and you may discover new possibilities and directions in what you do.



BACK TO SCHOOL



It's that time of year again when students have either started back or are beginning to start back to the school year and even old work routines.

While some aspects of getting back to old routines are welcome, there are plenty of reasons why students, teachers, and parents will have mixed feelings getting into what things that may have been dirupted during the pandemic.

THE POSITIVES

First the positives. Students will enjoy seeing old friends again, sports, extracurriculars, and trying new things. Dyslexics may thrive in personal interactions - social perception, empathy, teamwork, leadership - and this pandemic has been tough. Students learn from first-hand experiences and people. So, it's nice to have more direct contact again.

Other students may be significantly behind if your school is just starting back - and in the meantime, your student has had more time to get a little older and

BACK TO SCHOOL

probably expand their working memory so that they can take in more information at one sitting.

More review may be included with the start of this school year - which often will be a good thing for many dyslexic students after the summer break. Teachers may also allow more time for students to get up to speed.

The pandemic forced school districts to endorse new technology, remote education supports, and additional factors - like the \$123 billion dollar American Rescue Plan - have provided additional funding that can help students, including dyslexic students. Some districts have set aside funding for "high impact tutoring", while others have direct funds to support technology.

BE PROACTIVE AND FLEXIBLE

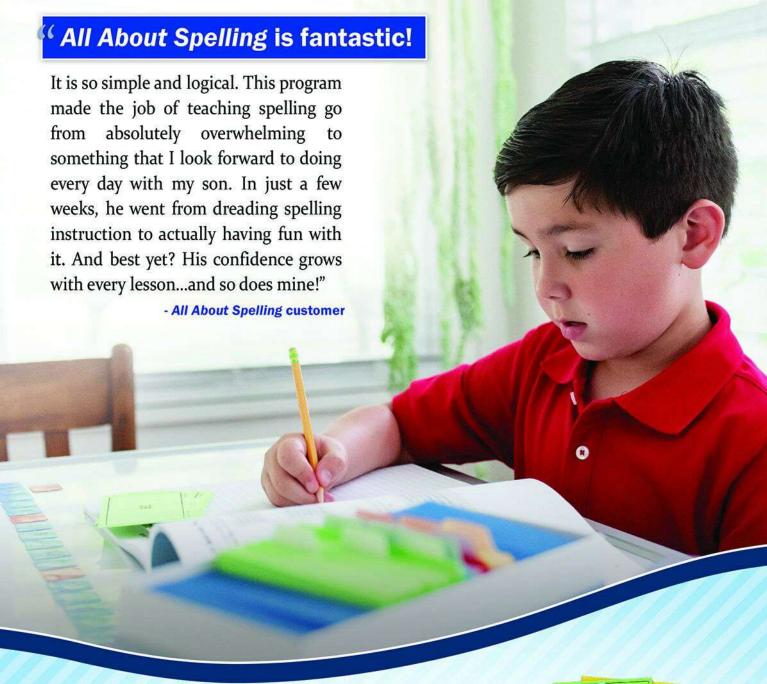
If you are a parent, you know that mixed feelings about heading back to school include physical and emotional health issues, and recurrent challenges of "keeping up or falling behind". Nevertheless, there are many positives that you and your children can look forward to, and thinking ahead, being proactive about your students' needs, and remaining flexible will help this year be as positive as it can be. If you have questions about getting your student off to the best start, join our weekly **Back to School Parents Question and Answer Forum** when it starts October 4th.

Schools and teachers face significant stresses with the resumption of the school year and policy changes since the start of the pandemic, and many schools face even more changes and significant losses in personnel that cannot be easily replaced.

It's important for parents to try their best to "thread the needle", trying to balance the needs of their student with the needs of their teachers and the school.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A SLOW START

It's likely there will be a slow start with the school year, as students and teachers adjust to the new routine. Watch to see what supports your student requires to be successful, and try out several options before the demands increase.



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BACK TO SCHOOL

SUPPORT COMES LOTS OF WAYS

Supporting your student or students can take many forms. You might need to give them that much needed break from school activities, or it may be that you need to act as your student's peripheral brain and help problem solve and organize until certain things fully come "online."

Some parents or grandparents have a second job when their kids come home, helping with homework and reading book assignments. Some parents essentially get a PhD in their own kid, learning whatever they need to know to help them and remediating them in reading, writing, math, or any other subject if they don't get the support they need at school.

Some parents can afford after school tutors while others may have trouble knowing how to help if they are dyslexic themselves and still have significant challenges. Sharing dyslexia between parent and child can still be a positive gift; Brock and I often spoke to students who you could see just beamed when they talked about sharing their dyslexia with one or both parents. One ten-year old girl referred to her dad as her "dyslexic buddy" and they clearly shared this marvelous out-of-the-box thinking and sense of humor.

Some parents who hated reading aloud as kids, rise to the challenge when they have their own kids and proudly pass the baton when their students can read aloud more fluently than they can.

For school, if there are significant backlogs on waiting to be tested or waiting for recommendations, then see if teachers are willing to grant accommodations while your student is waiting for formal paperwork - which might only be



released after the school year is nearly over. If some changes can help your student learn better and perform better in school, it can be win-win for everyone.



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Dyslexia Awareness Month



It's fall. The weather's getting cooler, the days are getting shorter, and if we look up, many of the leaves are turning red- and so is the global dyslexia community.

Go Red for Dyslexia is a worldwide campaign supported by Succeed With Dyslexia that takes place during Dyslexia Awareness Month in October. It aims to change the narrative for people with dyslexia and low literacy. It's focused on raising awareness of dyslexia and working to end the stigma, and showing the world all of the amazing things that individuals with dyslexia can do.

The Year of Inclusivity

2022 is Go Red's year of inclusivity: that means focusing on celebrating and helping the people who are building the foundations for a better, more accessible tomorrow in the workplace, at school, and in our communities and societies.

Go Red looks like...

- · Asking your local buildings and landmarks to light up red for dyslexia awareness
- · Applauding even more incredible achievements of people with dyslexia
- Celebrating dyslexic creativity
- Talking about dyslexia and inclusivity in your schools, workplaces and social groups
- Turning your world red from clothes to corporate logos

And sharing your stories, experiences and hopes for the future using #GoRedForDyslexia on your social media.

Why do we Go Red?

We're all familiar with the color red: when we're learning in class and looking back at our work, we associate red with our mistakes, corrections, and crossings out. It's a color that's been used to draw attention to a sense of failure, and Go Red have decided it's time for a paradigm shift.

With this campaign, Succeed With Dyslexia want to reclaim the color red and this part of dyslexic history. Red can become something empowering for the global dyslexia community, a color that unites us as we create change for the bettersomething that represents awareness, diversity, innovation, connection and our strengths.

Statistics vary on the subject, but it's thought that around one in ten people everywhere have dyslexia. But as far as public perceptions and knowledge go, many people are still in the dark about it, and what it means.

People everywhere are treated differently because they have dyslexia, and some people hold the vastly incorrect assumption that having dyslexia means you're not smart or capable of incredible things. Some people who have dyslexia aren't even aware of it, because they've never had guidance on what to look for, what help and support is out there, and how small changes like assistive tech can open up a whole new world of living and learning.

Go Red for Dyslexia wants to change these narratives for the better.

Succeed With Dyslexia would love to have you on board for this year's Go Red, so make sure that you're making plans and keeping up with the very latest Go Red action at @succeedwithdyslexia on Instagram and TikTok.





You can also visit us online or get in touch via go-red@succeedwithdyslexia.org.







Go Red is part of the Succeed With Dyslexia movement to celebrate dyslexia at a global level. Succeed With Dyslexia collaborate on a number of campaigns with individuals and organizations to raise awareness of dyslexia and the power of literacy.





Are You Dyslexic? Why Wait And Wonder?

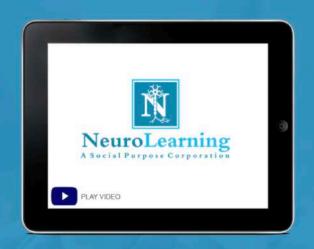
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Michelle Lucas, M.Ed., AT



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LANGUAGE TEACHING AND DYSLEXIA: WHAT ABOUT EXCEPTIONS TO RULES?

The English language is especially difficult to learn if you are dyslexic - because about half of its words are not predictable by simple rules.

So what to do?

WORD FAMILIES

Learning similar words in similar groups can be motivating for students because they learn many words at one time. Dyslexic students tend to be good at recognizing patterns, so approaches like these are well-suited toward dyslexic students. One site for word family lists can be found here.

DON'T OVERSIMPLIFY THE RULES

Problems usually arise when students are taught an oversimplified rule like "a silent e makes a vowel say its name". The rule works for words like bake, bike, nose, and cute, but it doesn't work for words like have or dance.

The worse thing to do is to ignore the exceptions or tell a student "That's an exception", when they find words that don't follow the rule or rules that they were taught.

Instead, the different purposes of the silent e should be taught as a group of lessons - with plenty of time given to students to learn the different examples. Good structured literacy programs do this; casual phonics instructions don't... that's why dyslexic students benefit so much by structured literacy programs and intensive step-by-step intervention.

Parents and teachers may sometimes be perplexed about why dyslexic students need to know why certain things are the way they are - whether it's how a word is pronounced or spelled or why a certain problem solving method arrives at the correct answer.

LANGUAGE

The necessity of knowing why leads to deeper knowledge, but it can be very inconvenient in the educational system where rote memorization is emphasized and simple answers as to why things are the way they are may be hard to find.

DYSLEXIA AND INDUCTIVE LEARNING

Many dyslexics are avid inductive learners - that is, they learn well by experiencing and observing first hand, then reasoning back to first principles. That's why having students work to find patterns in words can be a more efficient way for them to learn than the deductive approach that may start with a list of rules.

But another key factor about inductive learning is the role that exceptions have in changing rules. Sometimes you may notice that a student comes to a complete halt because they discovered an example of something that doesn't fit with a rule that they've learned. Telling them to ignore the exception doesn't help... they can't because noticing exceptions is the way they learn - it's integral to the inductive learning process

Teach all the rules (if you can) and have them keep a notebook for different subjects that keep track of confusing examples and expand on rules to include exceptions. Let them work "open book" with their notebook so that they hold on to everything they learn - whether it's rules for reading and spelling or science and math.





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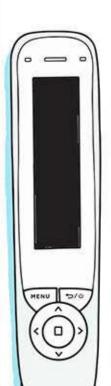




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education students. Our students who have received the ReaderPen™ are feeling better about reading which is translating into better academic outcomes."

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











LANGUAGE

Here's an example from **Reading Mama** of calling attention to words that need to be recognized on sight instead of being sounded out (orthographic mapping).

If they are learned together with color calling attention to the tricky parts, then it will be easier to remember than if only learn rules and have to make sense of exceptions they find on their own.

If you look closely at figure, the sound, for instance long a sound in "they" is written lightly in pencil.



Exceptions in math are more ambiguous terms than rule exceptions, but the principle still applied. Dyslexic students may be especially sensitive to detecting inconsistencies and ambiguities in math definitions.

Whenever possible, we recommend using a notebook with confusing terms and definitions when they are encountered and giving students refer to them when doing work or taking tests.

As an example of an ambiguity, think about the expression 7x and 71/2. When the number 7 is next to the variable x that represents an unknown number, the math operation that relates the 7 and x is multiplication. On the other hand, though when 7 is next to 1/2, the numbers are related by addition.

Good teaching (or tutoring) calls attention to these conflicts - and allows students time and support to learn the pattern until the recognition becomes almost automatic.



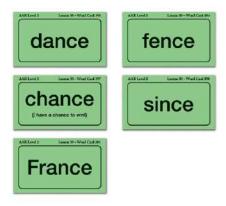
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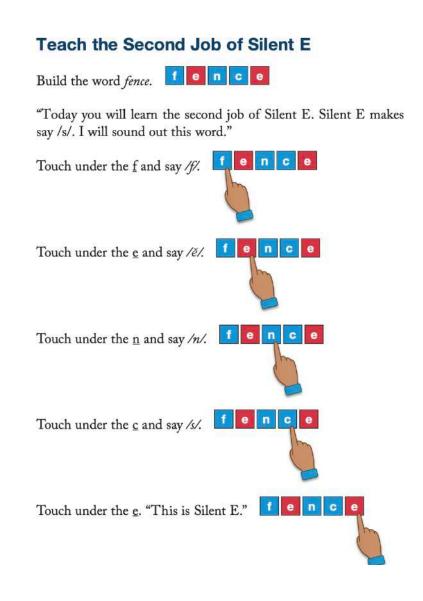
To use another from language, see the example of pattern recognition first. after learning the /k/ sound associated with the letter c. Later, they can learn the soft sound /s/ in words like dance and fence (full lesson HERE).



The most common mistake in incidental phonics programs is teaching a rule and not addressing what may be many exceptions.

For dyslexic students, it's always best to take a comprehensive approach that includes exceptions.

This may take longer at first, but the knowledge will be deeper and it will provide a strong foundation for further work.





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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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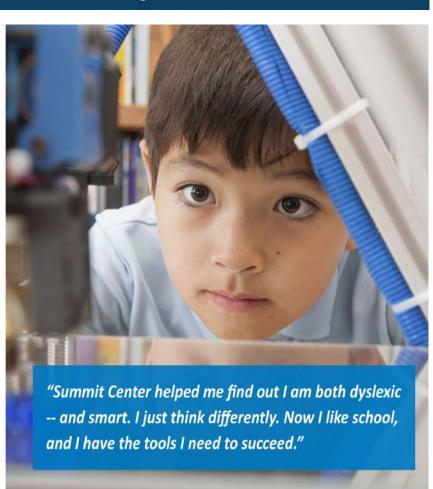
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JULIA'S PROJECT : BOOSTING THE ESTEEM OF ELEMENTARY KIDS WITH DYSLEXIA

As promised in the last newsletter, here's my interview with Julia de Montagnac ColoringConfidence.com

Julia shared her vivid memories of reading struggles in the 2nd and 3rd grades, and when the possibility of a service project came up, she wanted to interact with young students who might be undergoing some of the struggles she recalled.

She was able to improve her reading and rejoin the general classroom, but she doubted her ability until she realized she that she wasn't unintelligent. Her project with students involved drawing pictures to convey ideas and stories. English is one of her favorite and strongest subjects and she is an avid reader.

Way to go, Julia! Thanks for sharing your story and finding such a creative way to



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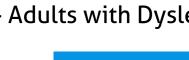
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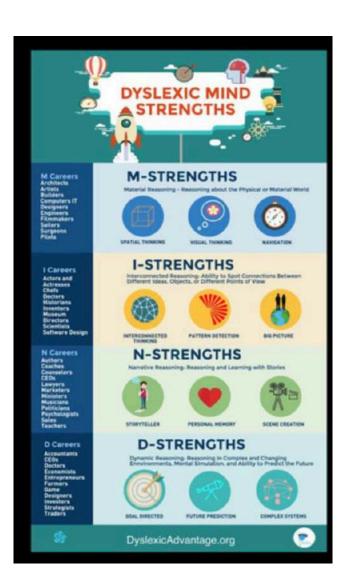
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