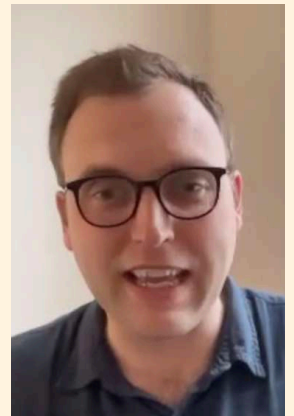


Dyslexic Advantage NEWSLETTER

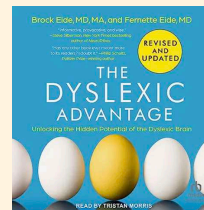
DYSLEXIA AND...



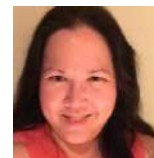
**INTERVIEW WITH
OUR AUDIOBOOK
NARRATOR
TRISTAN MORRIS!**



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WHAT'S THE POINT OF THE DYSLEXIC MIND?**



- WHAT ABOUT AUDIOBOOKS?
WITH YVONNA GRAHAM
- MANAGING TEST ANXIETY
- DYSLEXIA NEWS



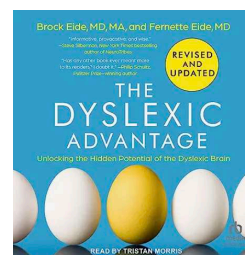
Fernet Eide MD, Editor



Dear Friends

Fun chat with our audiobook narrator Tristan Morris! Also important stories about text anxiety and audiobooks.

Sign up for a webinar with Brock What's the Point of the Dyslexic Mind? **HERE**. and check out our new mini-courses for teacher continuing education credits **here**.



Huge shout-out of thanks for our sponsors, Premium subscribers, and donors for life-changing resources they provide. If you're enjoying our book, please adding a review at Amazon, Audible or somewhere else. It helps spread the positive message - and thank you! ❤️

The **NEUROLEARNING** Dyslexia Screening App is \$49.99 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.

Thanks to Shelley Wear, Trish Seres, Michelle Williams, 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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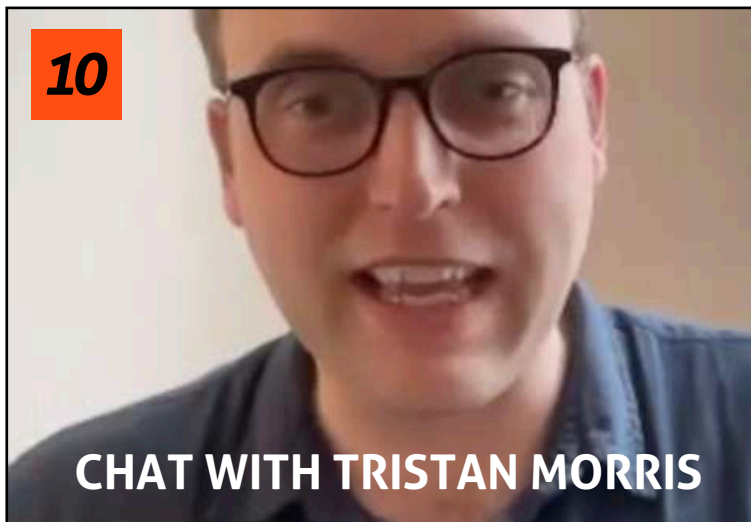
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**DYSLEXIA IN POPULAR
CULTURE ...
GREAT OR CRINGE-
WORTHY?**



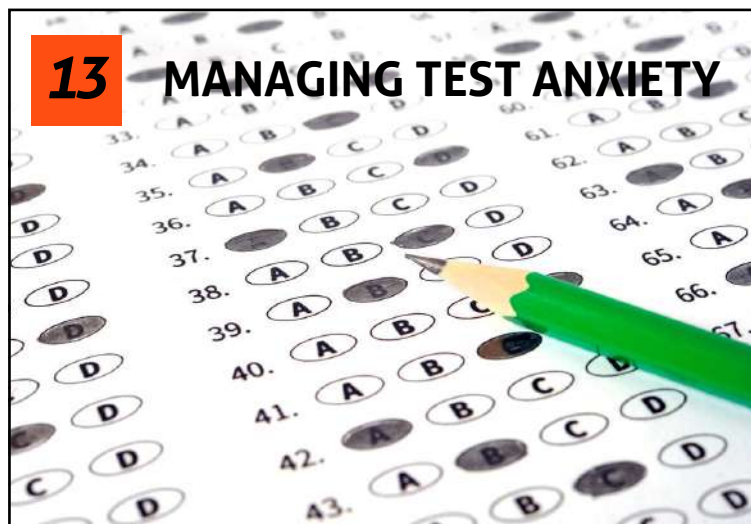
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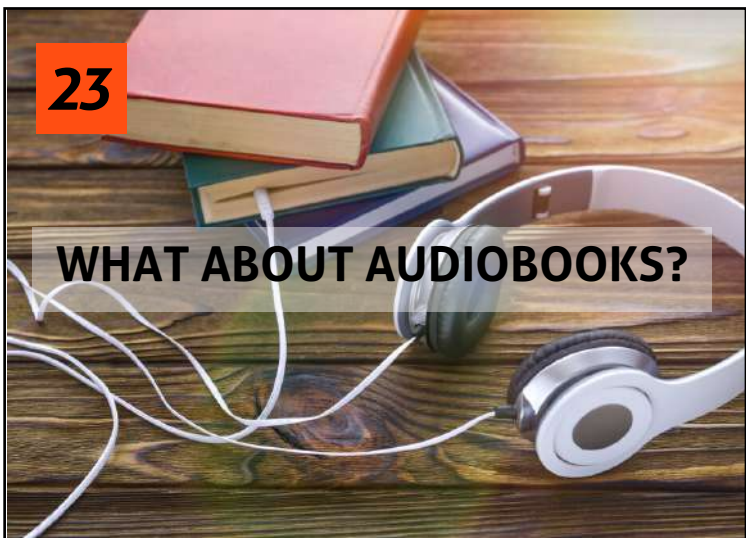
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DYSLEXIA NEWS



DYSLEXIA IN POPULAR CULTURE ... GREAT OR CRINGE-WORTHY?

With so much dyslexia in creative communities, it's not surprising that more authors and screenwriters are including dyslexic characters in their works. The strength side is appearing more commonly, but is it great or will it make you cringe?

The answer is, probably a little bit of both.

First the GREAT - dyslexia has been in entertainment news lately as Kelly Clarkson has been sharing her interest in dyslexia after her 8 year old daughter was found to be dyslexic.

In the youtube clip below, Kelly asks Captain America Anthony Mackie about the latest script for his Avengers movie and he shares how he must log onto a site to read the top secret material. He has to read under the supervision of an intern - but because he's dyslexic, he reads slow (starts at 4:56)



Kelly also responded with tears when Henry spoke to her daughter River after hearing that she was bullied at school for her reading.



It's a beautiful thing when more people are able to talk about their dyslexia and the more people speak out, the easier it is for 8 year olds and everyone else anywhere.

There's a long history of dyslexic characters in books, TV, and film, but on the grand scale of things, considering how common dyslexia is, still a drop in the bucket. When a dyslexic character is introduced as a recurring character in a film or TV series, the pressure can be on in terms of how people with dyslexia are presented to the world.

Writers with first-hand knowledge of dyslexia often fare better than those who don't have a personal connection, but by the nature of film, misrepresentations still occur, even though these films may do so much good just by their positive, inventive, and resourceful characters.

POPULAR MEDIA



Among fantasy feature movies, Percy Jackson is another much-loved fictional character.





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DYSLEXIA AND POPULAR MEDIA

But why all the flying letters to represent dyslexia?

For far too many people, popular media is the main way they learn new things - and far too few people know anything about dyslexia.

Recently, a friend and colleague recommend we watch Will Trent, a new TV series with a talented detective who is also dyslexic.

What started out as hope, turned to disappointment. Why screenwriters try to cover topics that they do not understand?

Hollywood and author Karin Slaughter - can't you do better?

PARTS OF WILL TRENT ARE CRINGE-WORTHY

Tech writer and mom Medium blogger Shannon Russo Soltesz recently wrote [Will Trent Got It All Wrong](#) (behind Medium's paywall) where she calls out the series for confusing dyslexia with complete illiteracy. Will can't read at all.

If you're a parent with dyslexic students, I would always recommend previewing a show yourself - otherwise you could be caught by an unpleasant surprise.

The show had originally been suggested to me as a TV character showing dyslexic strengths. A friend with a 12 year old son recently told me she was looking forward to watching it with her son - I told her she might want to think again.

Perhaps out of an attempt to balance, the first episode also has a pot-addicted character who is also dyslexic - who shoots himself in the head in front of the detective out of remorse for having participated in a kidnapping.

Really? Families who might have been excited to have even a mildly positive adult dyslexic character on TV to watch with their little kids, will have to wait a little longer.

The show is as likely to perpetuate as many myths and misunderstandings as any positives...but hopefully the writers will consult with more dyslexic people on future episodes.

At Salon, dyslexic designer Gil Gershoni [added](#) this in his critique about the show.

"...dyslexia is not illiteracy. Dyslexics can read, it's just that their brains don't do so linearly, like a non-dyslexic's might... Young children might write their letters flipped, but most adult dyslexics wouldn't still be struggling with that particular task. Finally, Will Trent owns an ancient flip phone, presumably to avoid the complexity of the modern iPhone – really? I assure you, dyslexics are just as beholden to, and capable of navigating, modern technology as the next person...."

(Brief note from Fernette- many might take issue with Gil's comments regarding dysgraphia. Many adults still have difficulties with dysgraphia, although the writing challenges are usually considerably worse as children).

Seeing ourselves in popular culture, in positions of power and success, in characters such as Will Trent, is important. It lets dyslexics know that we're ready, as a community, to understand the nuances around dyslexia. We need "Will Trent" to acknowledge that part of Trent's arc – from ashamed of his dyslexia to motivated and energized by it – in the following seasons the way that many dyslexics do, in real life.

Finally, we need to be careful that, in our representation, we're not turning dyslexia into a plot device without much basis in reality, a schtick that buries the learning difference in misinformation. We can use shows like "Will Trent" as an excellent launching pad for deeper discussions around learning differences — and how to create an environment in which they are celebrated, and dyslexics can thrive."

I know the writer and the actor who plays Will in the show have said positive things about dyslexia and seeing the world differently in interviews. Karin apparently has a family member who is dyslexic.

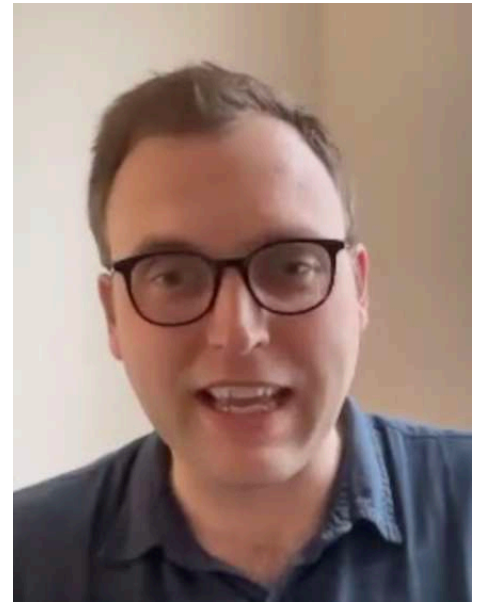
The series has renewed for another season, hopefully some involved in the production will hear about some of these cringe-worthy misses; there is so much potential in the stories. There are many who want to cheer you on!

OUR AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR

CHAT with TRISTAN MORRIS AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR FOR THE DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE

"...my dad read to me a lot and he would do voices...he was a good storyteller..."

- Tristan Morris



Our updated 2023 version of The Dyslexic Advantage is available in audiobook from places like [Amazon / Audible](#), and Brock and I enjoyed hearing Tristan's narration, so we reached out to him for this interview. Brock listens to books at a high speed of playback and he was happy to discover that Tristan's reading does well at all speeds!

Tristan has a prolific career as an audiobook reader, you can learn more at his site: <http://www.tristanmorrisvoiceover.com/> and he even does a wide range of voices depending on what is needed for a book.

Wow- what a wide ranging conversation we had!

I was interested in talking to him for a variety of reason - first to learn more about the person behind the voice, but also over the years we had seen a few students that were testing who had the gift of hearing the different voices of different people. It made them natural mimics, but also emotionally perceptive - so talking to Tristan, I hoped to learn more about this side....and I did.

Here are some excerpts:

"Some people will actually do like sound changes where they'll go through and write when there is a change of a specific vowel or a dropped consonant...I can

keep a placement change in my mouth, so it's not even like a different voice. It's more a different intention to a character so the rhythm of the way someone speaks or the pitch placement and I'll start to associate a feeling of a character or a rhythm of a character with a placement in the mouth...when I have multiple people speaking with distinctive voices in a scene...it's very stop and go, to get all the rhythm of it right so that it flows...but it becomees like second nature...once I get those people at the beginning of a book, I have you here and I have you there, I will place them. You have a more nasal voice and you have a bass voice. I kind of use the colors of what my voice can do, so that I can use my instruments. Those are the colors I can make with my voice."

Tristan is not just an audiobook narrator; he's also an actor who got his MFA in Drama (along with his wife) at the New School of Drama in New York City.

Interestingly, in order to help him memorize his lines, he learned that the best way for him to remember was to read his lines aloud in the theater after everyone had gone for the day. This trick was much better than just writing out the lines or repeating them at home. Going through the lines in the space and going through the motions of the play helped him learn his lines and part by heart.

Another interesting discovery I had when speaking to Tristan was that he thought there might be some dyslexia in his family:

"I was an auditory learner from very young... I identified with certain aspects of the challenges that dyslexic people face, but not the full set. I didn't have trouble learning to read when I was young, but I've always struggled spelling. I remembering being embarrassed having to spell in front of classmates. It was always really terrifying. You know, going up to write on the board, or on the overhead projector or whatever, I knew that I was going to misspell a basic word that I should have known. When I was in high school, I remember I misspelled a basic word and a close friend was just ragging on me in front of the class, and people laughed. It was just horrible. To this day, I have to spellcheck."

OUR AUDIOBOOK NARRATOR

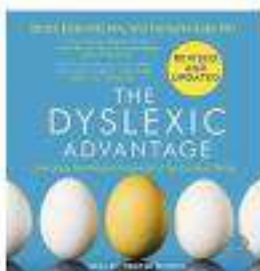
Tristan also shared that he has to read slowly because he has to hear the book in his mind (something that many adult dyslexics tell us.) Tristan also spoke about his father who was a talented commercial designer who sculpted and designed wax museums. Fascinating.

Could it be possible that a talented audiobook narrator may also have stealth dyslexia? Yes, it's possible, and it may also make a lot of sense.

Avid audiobook listeners don't want dry and dusty dictionary reading, they want one who conveys the life of a story. And maybe dyslexic people will have an advantage there - especially those who have been listening carefully to stories and differences among people's voices their whole life long.

Here is a small bit of my chat with Tristan. I will post our complete wonderful interview for our Premium subscribers. Thanks again, Tristan!

Dr. Fernette Eide Talks to Tristan Morris, Audiobook Narrator of The Dyslexic Advantage



MANAGING TEST ANXIETY

It's that time of year again - either time for standardized tests or end of year exams.

Test anxiety includes a variety of physical and emotional symptoms that include feelings of nervousness and hopelessness, fear, self-doubt, irritability, shortness of breath, rapid heartbeat, stomach pains, and headaches. Among elementary school children, standardized tests cause greater feelings of anxiety than routine classroom tests, and students with dyslexia may experience the stress and anxiety more acutely.

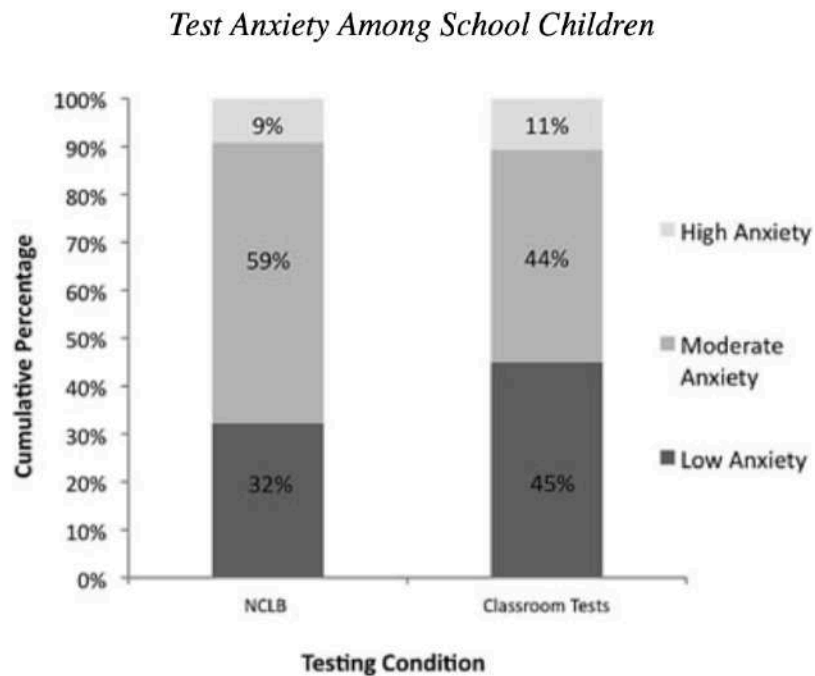


FIGURE 1. Rates of test anxiety by condition.

Reference

THE DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD OF TESTING FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

Testing can be a double-edge sword for dyslexic students - because a test result

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TESTING

may determine whether a student needs additional support, tutoring, accommodations, or even access to assistive technology. But testing may also inform decisions about holding back students, depriving them of electives, sports, etc.

Standardized tests also may have unintended negatives when they force students to sit through what may be hours of inappropriate material. For instance, elementary school students who are not yet decoding, may have to sit through hours of tests that they can't possibly complete, all the time magnifying their embarrassment and shame as other classmates don't seem to have the same struggles.

Researchers have [found](#) that young dyslexic students are more emotionally sensitive than their peers - and yet few considerations are given to the emotional well-being of students; they are often under greater academic, social, and emotional pressures - but for the most part, they are on their own.

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

If you're currently in the throes of testing season, eat well, get plenty of sleep, and don't emphasize outcome. If accommodations are permitted, then make sure they will be provided.

Practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing and talk through what to expect and strategies that a student can take (like answering the easy questions first) to reduce feelings of panic.

The [We Are Teachers](#) blog has a nice collections of suggestions to reduce anxiety when it comes to test time. Teachers should add in more recess if possible during the testing season and back-up plans should be discussed if an anxiety attack occurs during the test. Some students have a plan to take a brief break, get a drink of water or go out in the hallway for a moment.

Students can pick up on the anxiety of parents - and parents may be reliving some of their own anxieties with school and test-taking. Take stock of yourself, model self-compassion, and do your best to support your student through what may be a stressful time.



Discover Your Learning Ability

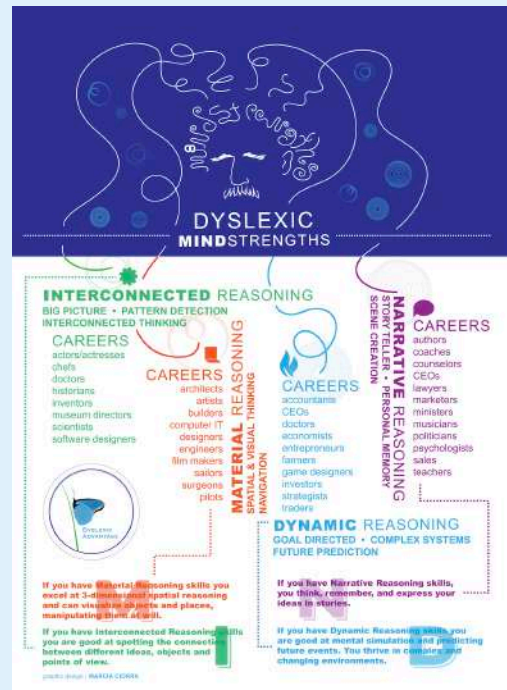
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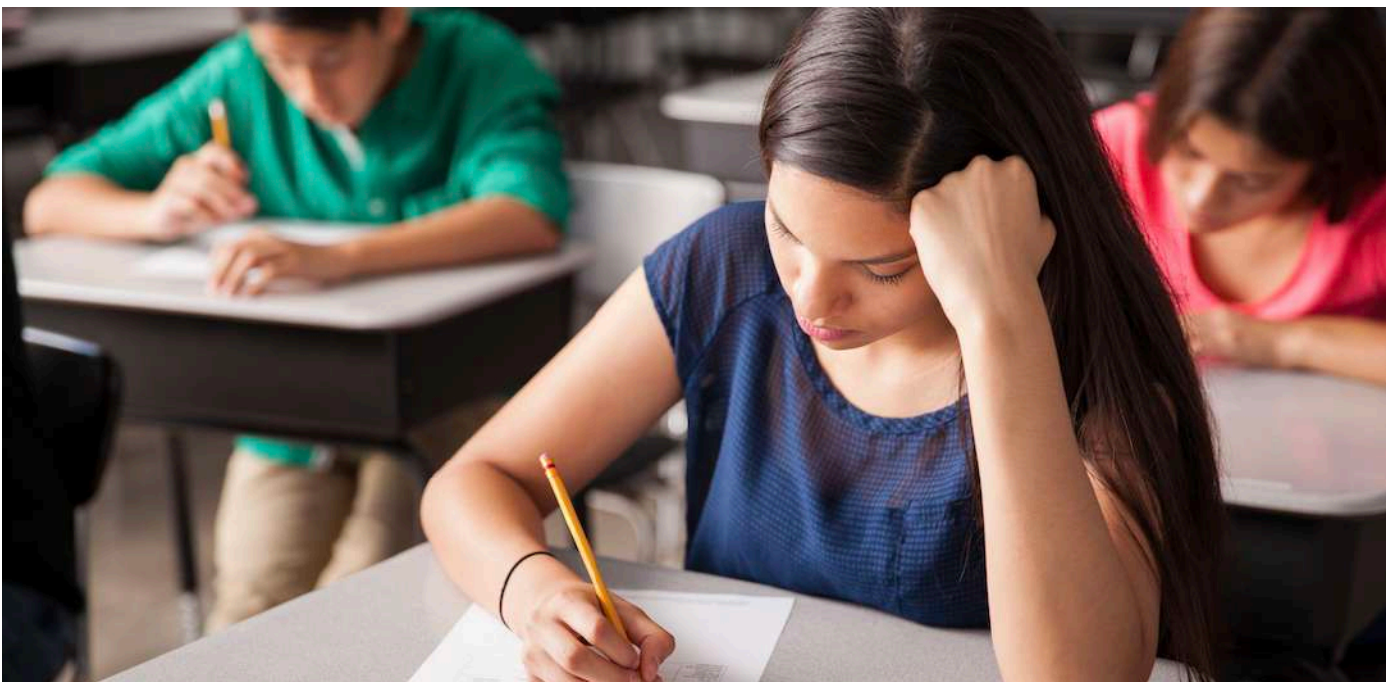


TESTING

If a student comes home upset with what they are certain was a "bad test", let them know that who they are as a person is much more important than any test. For many reasons, test-taking is especially difficult for dyslexic students; talk with them about how things will get better - and think about whether adding some low-stakes test-taking practice or learning more about metacognition will help them feel better-prepared for exams in the future.

Stanford Teaching Commons has a [simple lesson](#) to introduce the idea of metacognition. A lesson is provided (the example given is the carbon cycle), then afterwards, without looking at notes, a student tries to recall what was taught by drawing it. The difference with this sort of test is that the student analyzes what the gap was between being presented with something and recalling it - and then time is spent figuring out how the student may learn better.

Academically successful dyslexic students tend to be highly metacognitive; going over practice test questions with answers and explanations can identify issues (does the student need accommodations to read questions, for instance?) as well as help students recognize patterns of study and learning that they can optimize for all of their subsequent work. If you're a parent who may have trouble helping your student, see if your student's teacher or a tutor may help. If a student is behind, they may be eligible for tutoring paid by the school.





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SCANNING PENS CELEBRATES BIG WIN AT 2023'S EDTECH AWARDS

The EdTech Awards, from EdTech Digest, are the largest and most competitive program in education technology. We're excited to share that the ReaderPen won the 2023 The EdTech Cool Tools Award for the Special Needs/Assistive Technology Solution category. The ReaderPen and it's successor the C-Pen Reader 2 are text-to-speech assistive tech designed to help users overcome reading barriers and gain literacy independence.



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TESTING

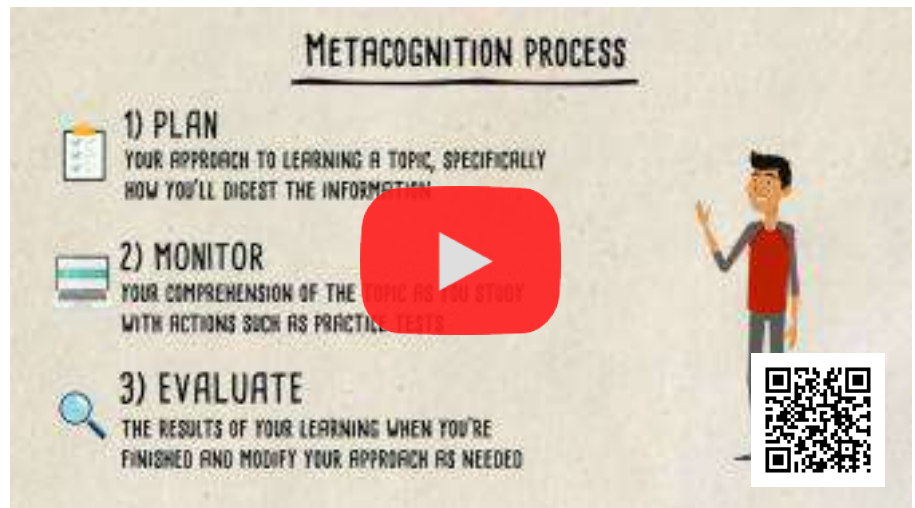
YOU'RE NOT ALONE

Often when students are struggling, they compare themselves to peers, and magnify negative feelings about themselves. Challenges with test-taking are universal. Share some of the stories in our [newsletters](#) or [Youtube channel](#). If you haven't watched our videos before, check out the one below:



Here's a reasonable general overview about metacognition (from a testing service).

Recognize that standardized tests may be a very poor indicator of a student's knowledge and thinking abilities. Still, some test results may have benefits - for example, accessing additional supports that may help.



For more tips, check out Psych Central's [10 Strategies for Before and During the Test](#)

A photograph of a woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt, leaning over a young girl with curly brown hair. The girl is wearing a light blue shirt and dark overalls. They are both looking down at an open book on a table, with the woman pointing at the text. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

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

WHAT ABOUT AUDIOBOOKS? INTERVIEW WITH DYSLEXIA KIT'S YVONNA GRAHAM

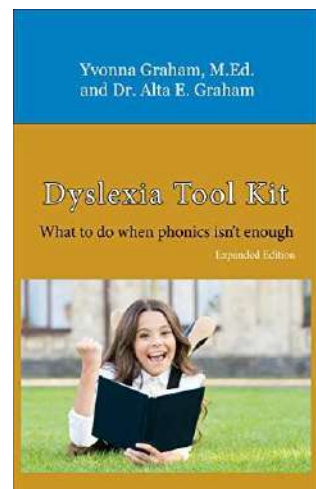
"Audio books, turned out to be the most powerful tool I had in my toolkit." - Yvonna Graham, MEd., author Dyslexia Toolkit

Despite the widespread availability of text-to-speech and audiobooks, it's only a small percentage of people who discover and use these tools.

Parents and teachers may feel ambivalent about the use of audiobooks, especially if they believe that students need to practice reading, but the downside of withholding audiobooks or assistive technology in general is that they may deny individuals a tool that could really accelerate their reading progress.

Recently, I sat down with author and dyslexia tutor Yvonna Graham to learn how she uses audiobooks and how they can accelerate reading progress rather than hamper it.

Audiobooks are not a replacement for structured literacy instruction when children or adults struggle with basic decoding - that is necessary. But if you want to get someone hooked on reading for pleasure as well as help catch them up with the learning through books that their classrooms demand, audiobooks may be a rocket pack for learning.



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Michelle Lucas, M.Ed., AT



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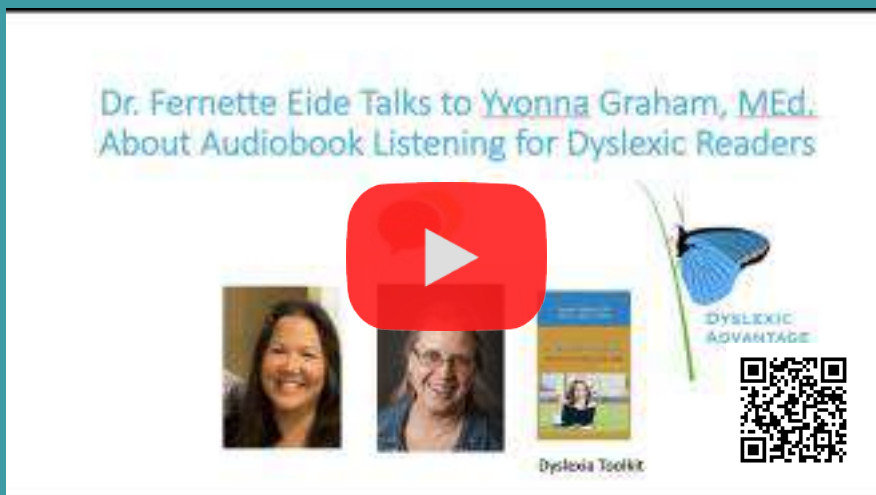
AUDIOBOOKS

Yvonna:

"The pushback that you've seen, and I've seen across the board from lots and lots of educators is that they feel like if kids listen to audiobooks, they won't put in the effort to read. What I found in actual practice, and what you actually showed research for in that first edition of *Dyslexic Advantage* is that the opposite happens. If the child is allowed to use audiobooks, to up their game, as far as their understanding of literature and syntax, then that student is more motivated to learn to read. They put in more effort. And in fact, comprehension improves dramatically. So just an audio book is a great tool.

What I found is that real progress happens if you pair audiobooks with tracking, so you have a student listening and looking at the text at the same time, without trying to do multiple things at once. Tracking with an audiobook means students don't have to vocalize words, sound out words, and all of that. If they're just watching the words, and they're hearing the words, this amazing thing happens. I tell the kids, the words are going to go in your ears and your eyes at the same time, and they're going get locked in your brain. That's a simple way of saying dual processing, which is what Dr. Matthew Schneps talks about in his research. His ongoing research, which I know you've been following, is a powerful resource. I've used it with hundreds of students with dyslexia, with tremendous success."

Watch my full
interview with
Yvonna >>>



AUDIOBOOKS

RESOURCES FOR AUDIOBOOKS

One of the best sources for free audiobooks is your local library. Check out a print book and an audiobook to listen while reading along.

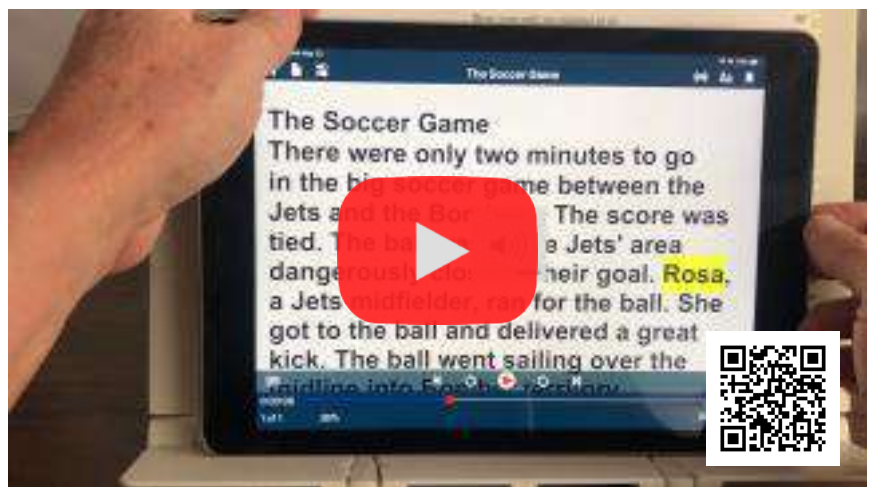
Readings by professional actors tend to be easier to listen to than electronic voices, but the gap between these two seem to be narrowing.

Here is a video for downloading an audiobook from [Libby](#) a public library app:



In the video at right, see how you can take a picture of text with an iPad and the [Voice Dream Reader](#) app, then have it read aloud to you with each word highlighted as it is read.

US students with dyslexia / "print disability" are eligible for FREE e-books through [Bookshare](#). If you don't have someone who can certify your print disability, the online [Neurolearning](#) app may be able to qualify you for free (US students) or discounted (adult readers) e-books.



What's the Point of the Dyslexic Mind?



New Research on Dyslexic Strengths

MAY 20th SATURDAY
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Universal Screening (Dyslexia) Isn't Enough

Education Week



Groundbreaking Singer Activist Harry Belafonte Dies at 96 (he was also dyslexic)

Smithsonian Magazine



I've Been Able to Use Dyslexia as a Positive - Jamie Oliver (new children's book)

Irish News



Octopus Movement: Can this Fast-Growing Movement Get the World to Embrace Non-Linear Thinking

Forbes



Sold a Story: How Teaching Kids to Read Went So Wrong

APM Reports

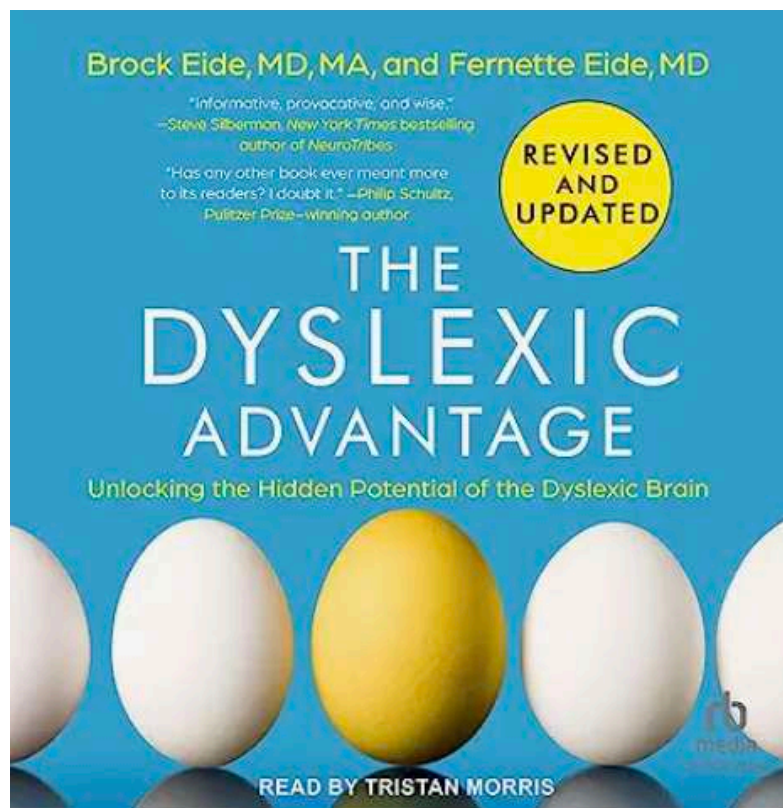


Kids Can't Read...the revolt that is taking on the establishment (NYTimes paywall or this Oman Observer link)

DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE AUDIOBOOK

**Revised and
Updated**

**Dyslexic Advantage
Audiobook**



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—A. KERMATH,
AMAZON REVIEWER

**"This book has
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I wish it existed
when I was a kid."

—BAP,
AMAZON REVIEWER

**"A
must-read..."**

helped me understand how
my child communicates,
listens and thinks."

—A. VAN METER,
AMAZON REVIEWER



“We have to teach children
how they can learn, not what
we think they should learn.”

- Henry Winkler, author, actor

