

NOVEMBER 2017 ISSUE 23

Dyslexic Advantage

NEWSLETTER



IN THIS ISSUE:

AMAZING ILLUSTRATOR JERRY PINKNEY!

- FAKE NEWS? DYSLEXIA CONTROVERSY GOES VIRAL
- HOW TO READ A WORDLESS PICTURE BOOK
- DYSLEXIA ADVOCACY UPDATE
- DYSLEXIA AT COLLEGE - WRITING
- DYSLEXIA AND MATH - ERROR ANALYSIS
- KARINA WRITING AWARDS & COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS OPEN FOR SUBMISSION!
- DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE ART SHARE
- GREAT APPS AND TECHNOLOGY
- BOOKS RECOMMENDED BY YOU AND MORE!



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NEWSLETTER **HERE**.

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Fernette Eide MD, Editor

Dear Dyslexic Advantage Friends,

We hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving season and enjoy all the beautiful illustrations in this issue. Don't forget, we've also opened our Karina Eide Young Writers Awards and the College Scholarships. Our STEAM Ingenuity awards are planned for the Spring.

This issue's coverage of the viral "fake news" dyslexia controversy is a reminder of how important it is to challenge misinformation whenever it rears its ugly head. Although our opt-in membership is now higher than 70,000, the speed with which this idea of "cause" and "cure" spread through the Internet and mainstream media shows the level of ignorance that must be fought in order to make the world a place where all dyslexic people can use their gifts.

If you believe in our mission, please consider supporting us through a **Premium Subscription** (if you haven't already). Warmest thanks to our donors, subscribers, and sponsors **Summit Centers, Parent Footprint, Sonday System / Winsor Learning, Kildonan School, and Churchill School in St. Louis** who make all that we do, possible.

Fernette Eide

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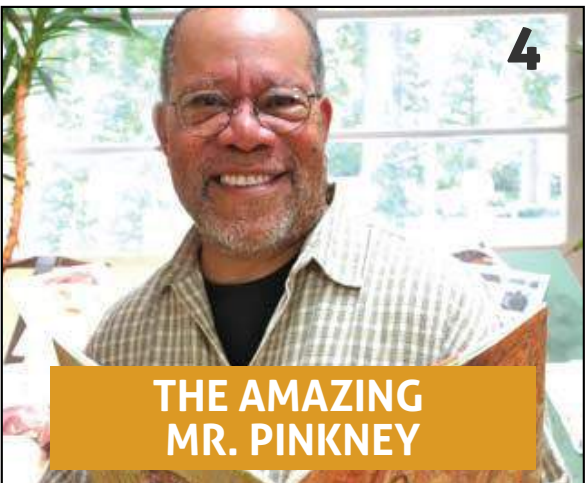
If you're reading a print copy of this issue, you can find the digital copy with all the interactive features here: <https://joom.ag/25SL>

Refresh your browser if you have any trouble with seeing videos. It usually means that you have a slow internet connection. Any questions, contact us **HERE**. Thanks!!



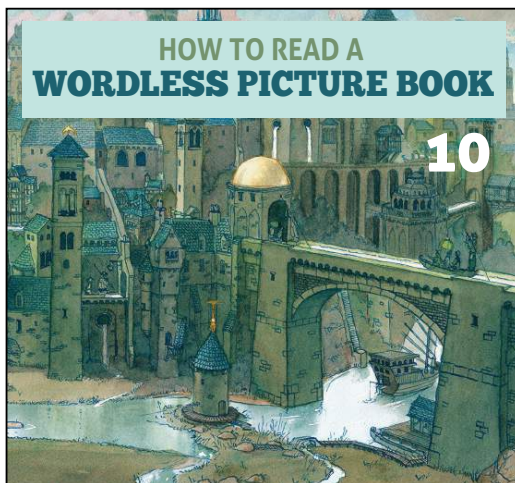
CONTENTS

DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE ISSUE 23 NOVEMBER 2017 NEWSLETTER

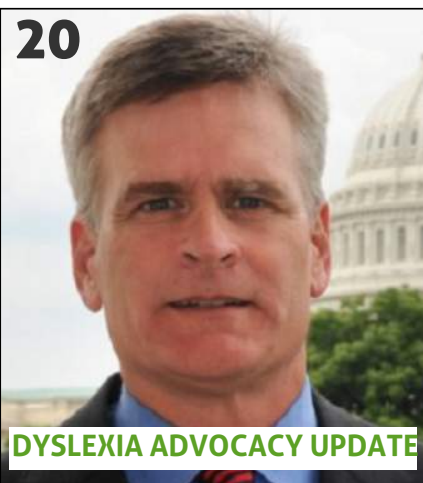


4

**THE AMAZING
MR. PINKNEY**



10



20

DYSLEXIA ADVOCACY UPDATE

FAKE NEWS?
DYSLEXIA CONTROVERSY GOES

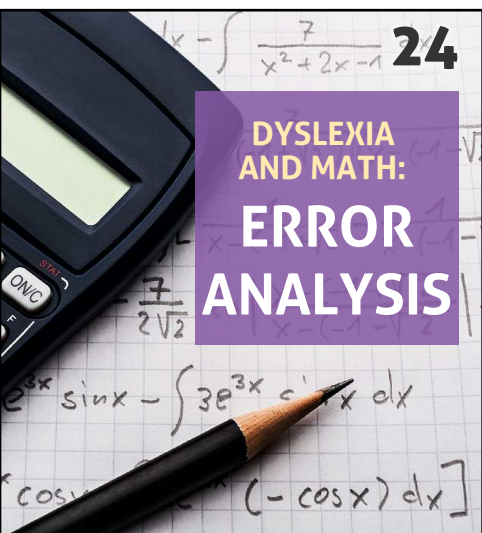


15



22

**DYSLEXIA AT COLLEGE:
THE CHALLENGE OF WRITING**



24

**DYSLEXIA
AND MATH:
ERROR
ANALYSIS**

APPS & TECHNOLOGY



28



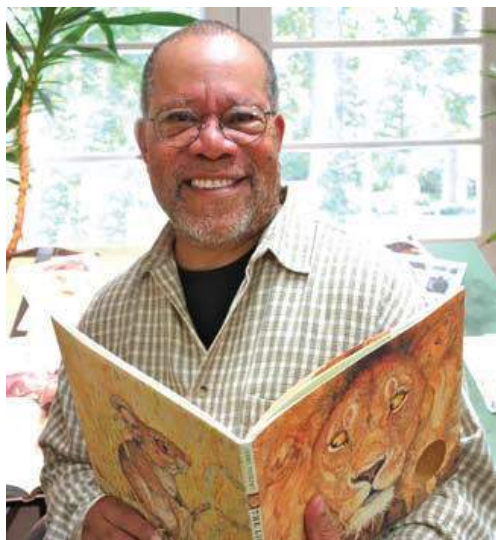
36

DYSLEXIA IN THE NEWS

FROM THE COMMUNITY



32



THE AMAZING MR. PINKNEY

Jerry Pinkney has to be one of the world's most beloved illustrators and what's especially important to share with this community, is the fact that he is an outstanding personal advocate for dyslexia and the abilities that come with it.

"My dyslexia always made me envious of people as they talked about a book being a great read, while it was difficult for me just to finish a novel... (but) though I read slowly, I can hold on to great amounts of detail and this made me quite suitable for illustrating full novels, like James Michener's *The Covenant*, a whopping 1000 pages!"



Jerry Pinkney is a 5X Caldecott Medal Award winner (Caldecotts are the Nobel Prize for children's book illustrators) and one of the world's most beloved children's book illustrators. Illustrating over 100 books, Jerry told us that his special affection for Aesop's fables came from his mother reading Aesop to him when he was a child.

Although Jerry struggled with reading, he remembered constantly coming up with new ways to avoid reading out loud or writing a note. Fortunately, said Jerry, "I drew great satisfaction from making pictures and was acutely aware of how drawing centered my being, enabling me to focus."

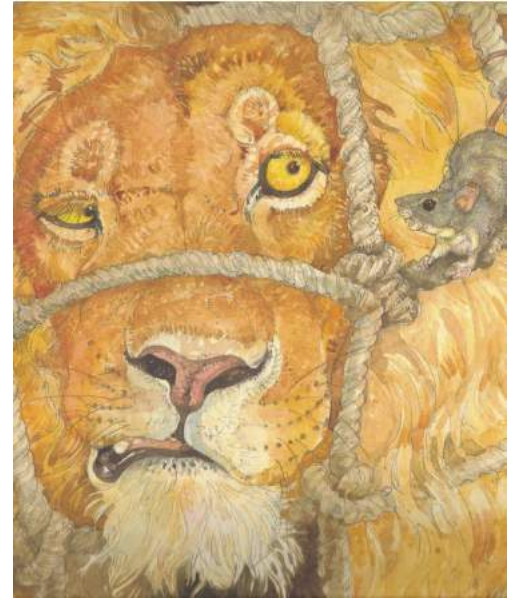
"For the young person who is struggling in school, never forget there are many different ways to learn. Be curious. Do not be afraid to try. Do not be disappointed when making mistakes. You will discover your own unique way of understanding the things being taught. Learn from mistakes. Everything that happens to you will frame who you are, and who you will become. Your path to success will follow."



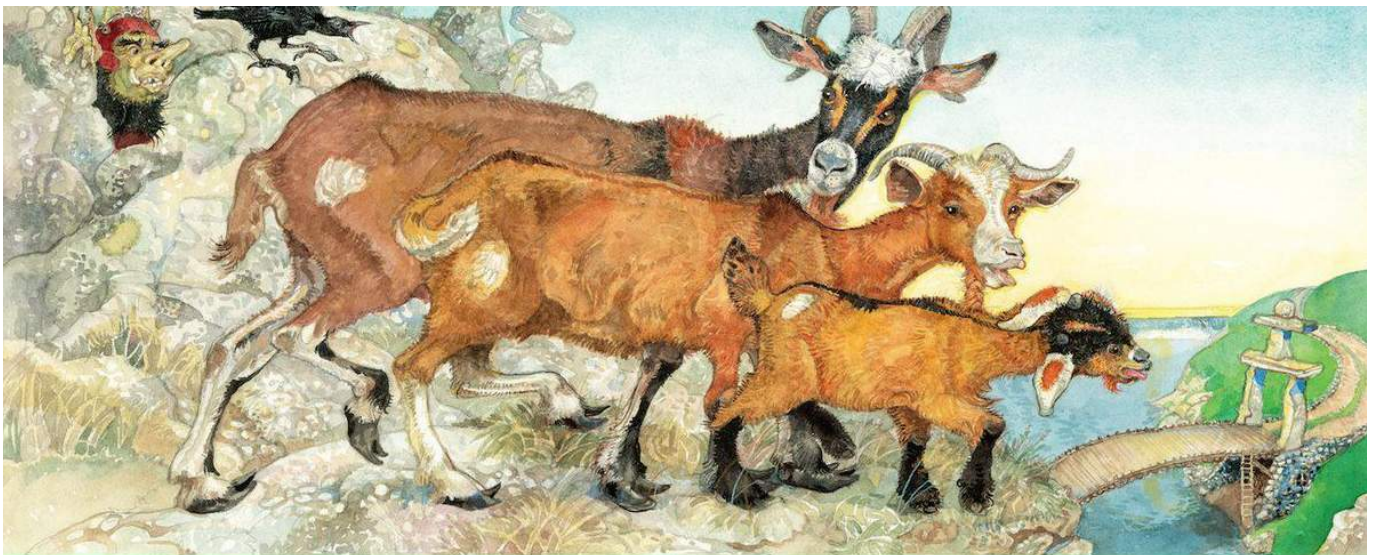
INSPIRATION

Seeing Jerry's work, it's not surprising to learn that he's also won lifetime achievement awards (Laura Ingalls Wilder Award, Coretta Scott King-Virginia Hamilton Award), in addition to being named the Norman Rockwell Museum's Artist Laureate.

Jerry's father was a jack-of-all-trades, working as a plumber, electrician, and carpenter. His mother, Williemaë read the tales of Uncle Remus and legend of John Henry in addition to all of Aesop's Fables. He remembered loving animals from an early age and treasuring visits to the city zoo and visiting relatives with animals in the country.



As early as the first grade, Jerry remembered enjoying drawing at school, and his drawing helped build his confidence that helped him focus on his other studies. At the age of 12, Jerry worked selling newspapers at a newsstand. When it wasn't busy, he would often sketch people walking by or waiting for the bus. One day, a customer introduced himself. He was an artist who drew the popular comic Henry.



THE THREE BILLY GOATS GRUFF

BY CALDECOTT MEDALIST
JERRY PINKNEY

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SPATIAL THINKING

VISUAL THINKING

NAVIGATION

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INTERCONNECTED THINKING

PATTERN DETECTION

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- Ministers
- Musicians
- Politicians
- Psychologists
- Sales
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N-STRENGTHS

Narrative Reasoning: Reasoning and Learning with Stories

STORYTELLER

PERSONAL MEMORY

SCENE CREATION

D-Careers

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- CEOs
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- Economists
- Entrepreneurs
- Farmers
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- Designers
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D-STRENGTHS

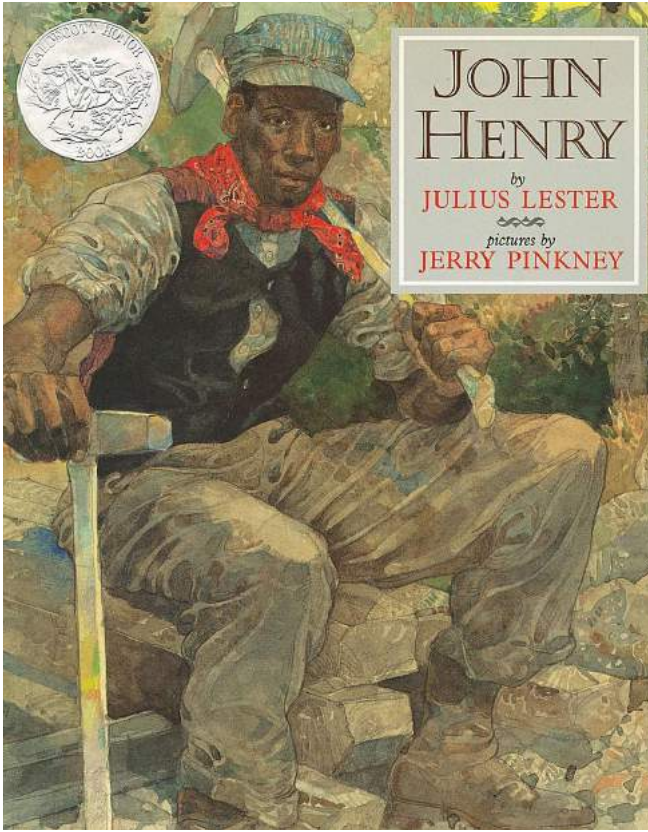
Dynamic Reasoning: Reasoning In Complex and Changing Environments, Mental Simulation, and Ability to Predict the Future

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JERRY PINKNEY (continued)

It was then that Jerry realized he wanted to become a professional illustrator. Jerry went on to study commercial art at a vocational high school and earned a full scholarship to the Philadelphia Museum College of Art. He and a classmate almost didn't get a chance at the scholarship when a high school teacher thought only to mention the program to the white students in his class. In retrospect, Jerry sees this decision as similar to his father's who thought his dream of being an artist might be unrealistic because of his race. This teacher had in fact recognized his abilities and awarded some of the highest marks in his class.

Fortunately, he didn't stop with the discouraging situation. He picked up an application from the high school counselor and also encouraged another African American classmate to get one too. They would both win full-ride scholarships to art school.

Jerry has also been interested in bringing the contributions of African Americans to children's literature in books such as *Minty* (about young Harriet Tubman), *John Henry* (a Caldecott Honor book), and *Black Cowboy, Wild Horses*.

Listen to our brief exclusive interview with Jerry Pinkney below. He provides great advice about those interested in art, visual thinking, and dyslexia. Take a listen!

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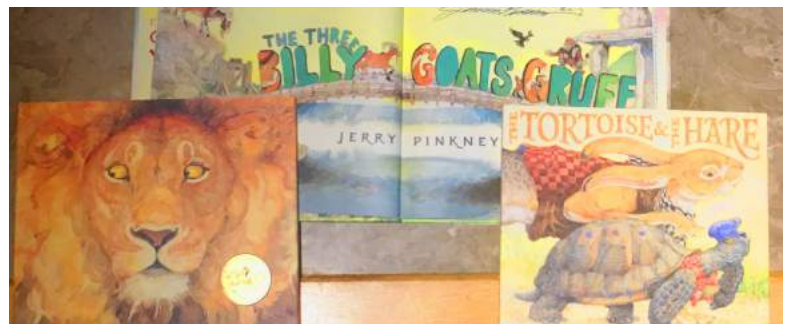
SHARE YOUR ART!

A famous artist we know said, "If you don't share your art, it doesn't exist!"

CALLING ALL DYSLEXIC ARTISTS! Please share upload a favorite photo of your artwork so that we can share it in an upcoming issue of this newsletter. If you upload your art by December 1st, 2017, and you'll be automatically entered in a random drawing for an autographed picture book by award-winning author illustrator, Jerry Pinkney!

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HOW TO READ A WORDLESS PICTURE BOOK

"I believe a good picture book comes very close to philosophy."

- Cao Wenxuan, winner of the Hans Christian Anderson Award in Children's Literature

With so much focus on reading for children with dyslexia, the choice of a wordless picture book might seem to be unusual, but it shouldn't be. Dyslexic children should be exposed to wordless picture books at an early age, and also be encouraged to continue read them even when they are older. In many ways, picture books (or movies) are a more natural way for dyslexics to process stories.

If you didn't grow up reading wordless picture books, here are some great ideas of how to introduce or read these books with kids.

1. Approach the Book as a Discovery. Look at the cover and pictures as clues and wonder aloud with your child or class. Be open to observations and different interpretations.

2. Don't Turn the Page Too Fast. Wordless picture books require a different pace.





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READING

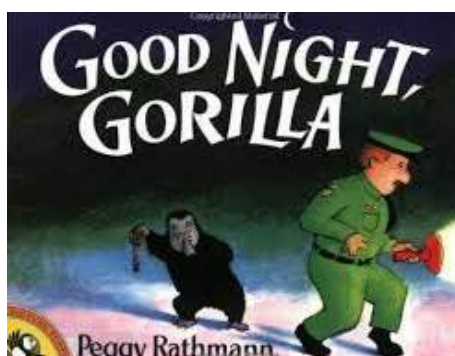
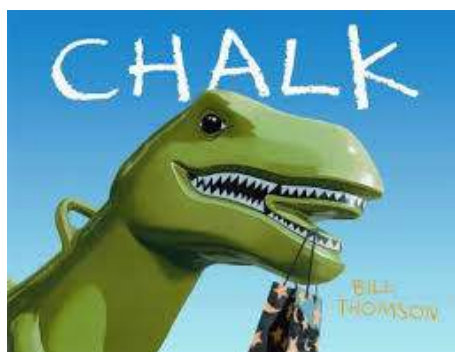
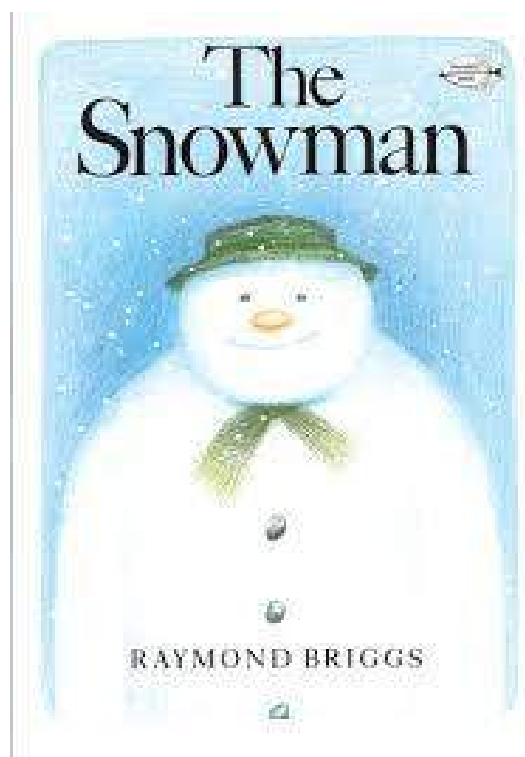
READING WORDLESS PICTURE BOOK (continued)

3. Ask Questions. What do you think is happening? What else do you see and how do you think she feels? Do you ever feel this way? And finally, what do you think will happen next? Good pictures stimulate creative thinking and problem solving, empathy and compassion, and also help children become good storytellers themselves.

4. Turn the Book into a Movie. Bring the book alive by adding dialogue and different voices.

5. At Points of Tension or Conflict, Ask, "What Would You Do?" From Aaron Becker, illustrator of The Journey Trilogy: "I think this helps children identify with the characters' challenges. And it raises the stakes for what might happen on the page turn. Act surprised even if you know what's coming.

Popular wordless (or almost completely wordless) picture books for young children include books such as Jerry Pinkney's *The Lion and the Mouse*, Raymond Briggs, *The Snowman*, Bill Thomson's *Chalk* or Peggy Rathmann's *Good Night Gorilla*.

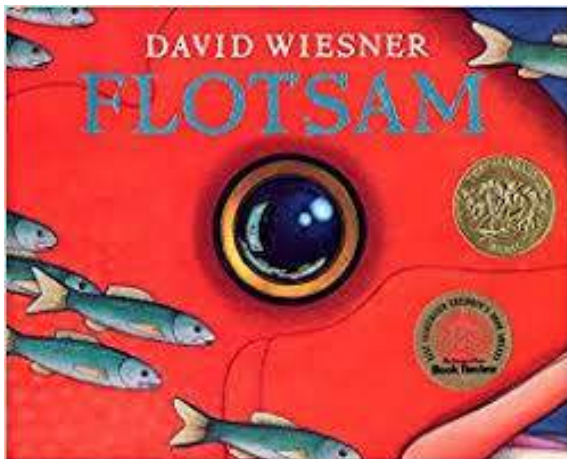


Clicking on the cover links you to the page of the book on Amazon. Purchases there will benefit Dyslexic Advantage programs.

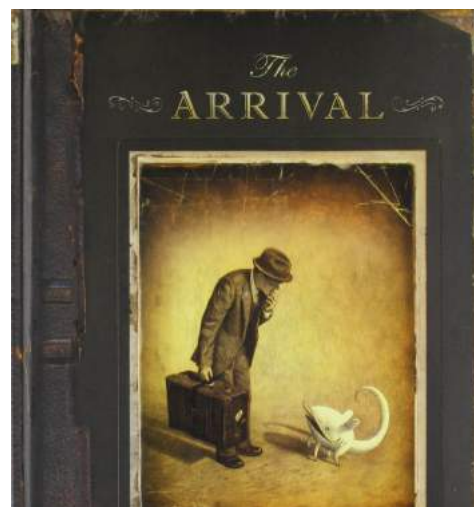
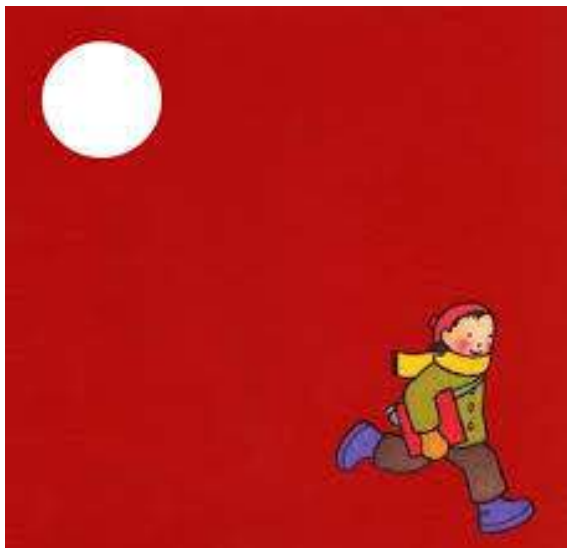
"As adults, we've seen so much before that we often turn the pages of a picture book without really looking. Young children tend to look more carefully."

- author Anthony Browne

In the last few years, there has been an explosion of high quality visual-rich books for older readers. Great wordless picture books for older readers includes books like David Wiesner's *Flotsam* or Aaron Becker's *Journey Trilogy*. Other great wordless picture books for older readers include Barbara Lehman's *The Red Book*, *Mr. Wuffles*, and *The Arrival*. 'Read alouds' of the books (individual retellings) can often be found on YouTube and they can give you some examples of how to tell the stories with your own words.



*Video example of adding words to the reading of the wordless picture book, *The Red Book*.*



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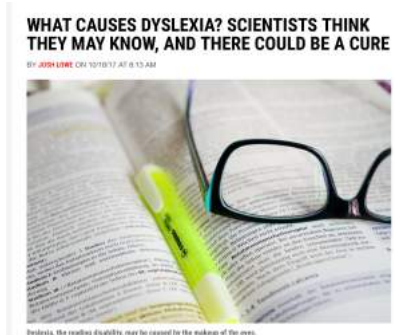


FAKE NEWS?

DYSLEXIA CONTROVERSY GOES

October was Dyslexia Awareness Month, so many media channels opened their pages and platforms to dyslexia stories. Unfortunately, the one story that really became viral was one that was carried by outlets such as Newsweek, The Telegraph, and Mental Floss, media outlets who should know better or at least consult with scientific, clinical, or educational experts in the field of dyslexia.

The problem with this misinformation is that it competed with legitimate information about dyslexia and worse, adds to the false narrative that dyslexia is simply "a problem with the eyes."



As it turned out, these 'fake news' articles were all linked to a scientist who does not work in the field of dyslexia, but instead has proposed how certain stones could have been used by ancient Vikings to navigate by the sun.

Guy Ropars is a physicist at the University of Rennes in France. As co-author of the article, he seemed to have triggered a huge media firestorm when he stated: "Our observations lead us to believe that we indeed found a potential cause of dyslexia," but of course anyone with even a basic understanding of the science of dyslexia knows that no single discovery involving a flickering light and the eyes is going to account for a "cause" and "cure."

In Newsweek's case, it was especially disappointing to see the article because some 14 years ago, Newsweek had published a better informed article, entitled, Dyslexia and the New Science of Reading.

DYSLEXIA IN THE NEWS

The paper that triggered all the news articles is located [HERE](#) and is not free access.

Nevertheless, some challenges (including ours) have led at least some media to begin to temper sensationalistic headlines.

Although the Daily Mail still begins "Dyslexia May Be Caused by an Eye Deformity..." it did mention that Linda Seigel, Editor-in-Chief of the IDA's journal felt that the claims "cause" and "cure" were dubious.

Anyone who has even a basic practical knowledge of dyslexia recognizes the importance of phonological awareness and various aspects of language, but apparently it is easy enough to fool some science reporters that a flickering LED light could possibly "cure" dyslexia. It also tells you how much ignorance there is among the general public about dyslexia. If that scientist's claims were correct, then closing one eye would 'cure' dyslexia.

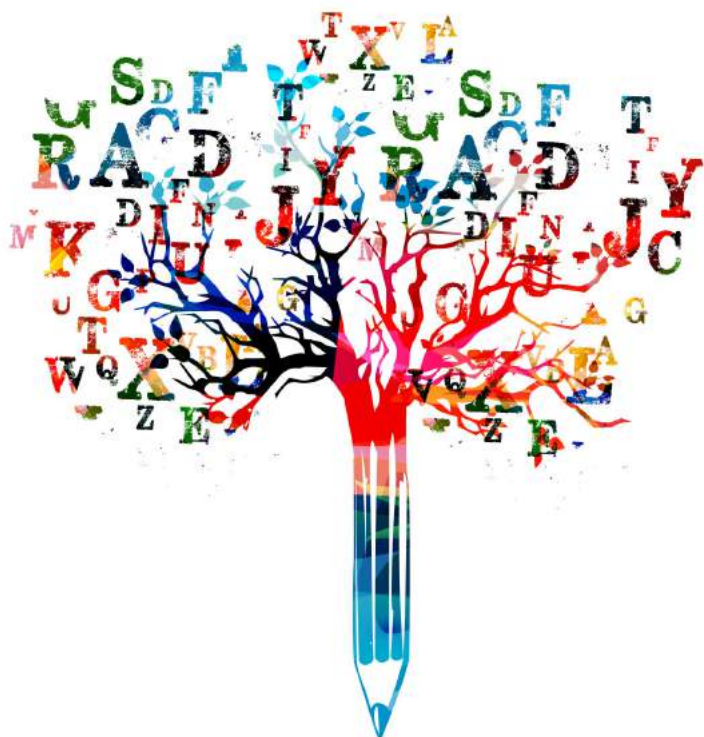


Thankfully, scientists are beginning to speak out. From Professor Mark Liberman of the University of Pennsylvania:

"Dyslexics, their families and teachers, reading researchers and treatment specialists, and the organizations that represent them are asking: did someone just discover the cause and cure for dyslexia? (I know this: I get email.) As someone who has conducted

research in the area, my question is different: how did this terrible article get published and how can its harmful impact be counteracted?

Nothing whatsoever can be concluded about the causes of dyslexia from this study, as it is described in the article. Basic information about the methods and results are not provided; the procedures used in collecting the data raise numerous concerns; the link between the purported anomaly and dyslexia is conjectural; and the impairment does not explain other, better established facts about reading impairment. The study is based on some of the hoariest stereotypes about dyslexia—that it results from reading letters backwards and/or pathological persistence of visual images, that can be corrected by manipulations that affect color perception."



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DYSLEXIA IN THE NEWS

DYSLEXIA CONTROVERSY (continued)

Read his entire blog post [HERE](#).

N.B. For those readers who are curious about the visual findings reported in the study, the authors are not eye scientists, but rather laser physicists. They did not examine the eyes of dyslexic people, but made speculations of differences based on the drawings of dyslexic and non-dyslexic subjects.

It is important that misleading articles in the media about dyslexia be challenged as soon as they occur, because mistakes can have negative ripple effects, discouraging teachers and parents from employing helpful strategies or shutting down much-needed funding for teacher training and dyslexia identification.

N.B. As a group, young dyslexic students tend to have more difficulty with letter reversals while reading, however, these differences tend to resolve by 11 years of age. (Wolff and Melngailis, 1996).



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DYSLEXIA ADVOCACY UPDATE



Aside from the media distraction about dyslexia "cause" and "cure", this past month saw continued progress in both the legislation and implementation of dyslexia policies.

At the federal level, the Department of Education declared October 2017 Dyslexia Awareness Month, the President made a statement about dyslexia [HERE](#), and Secretary of Education DeVos held a dyslexia round table in Washington D.C.

Her statement: "Every child has unique challenges and abilities, and children with dyslexia are no different – they simply learn differently. As many as one in five Americans experience a language-based learning disability, and too many of them do not receive the resources they need in our schools. The Department will continue to work every day to empower families with the supports and services they need in learning environments that best fit their children's individual educational needs. I'm grateful to Sen. Bill Cassidy and Dr. Laura Cassidy for joining this discussion and for their exceptional work on this issue, and I thank all of today's participants for the constructive exchange."

Education Week noted that special education advocates have felt considerable anxiety about DeVos' leadership. Said Cassidy, "I think the fact that she convened the meeting and was so attentive throughout told us volumes. It told us that she cares about the issue, that she wants to democratize, if you will, the opportunities for children with dyslexia. She's going to listen..."



Harvard Professor Thomas Hehir has shared this opinion of the recent SPED documents that were rescinded by DeVos and the Department of Education: "Some of these changes amount to nothing, to be honest, such as outdated memos ...However, in some areas, where the law may have changed, it would be helpful to issue new policy guidance." Read more **HERE**. He did worry that the action would send the wrong message about critical needs in special education.

On the State level, New Jersey has posted its new Dyslexia Guide **HERE**.

From Missouri (Missouri Net):

"..The task force is proposing for all kids from kindergarten through third grade to be screened for dyslexia...In addition, the group is recommending dyslexia screening for transfer students, and those identified as struggling by their teachers, parents or by scoring in the lower 30th percentile of assessments....The program would include a dyslexia training program for teachers and targeted intervention for students...(and) require teachers to get two hours of in-service dyslexia training every year. "

The advertisement features a young girl with freckles and a pink polo shirt on the left. The background is a chalkboard with the word "DYSLEXIA" written in large, light blue letters, and a white "A+" grade next to it. Below the chalkboard text, the text "Discover your learning ability." is written in a white serif font. Further down, "CHURCHILL CENTER & SCHOOL" is written in a large, white serif font, with "National Leader in Learning Disabilities" in a smaller white serif font below it. At the bottom, there is a green banner with a white button that says "LEARN MORE" and the text "St. Louis, MO 314.997.4343" to its right.

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DYSLEXIA AT COLLEGE:

THE CHALLENGE OF WRITING

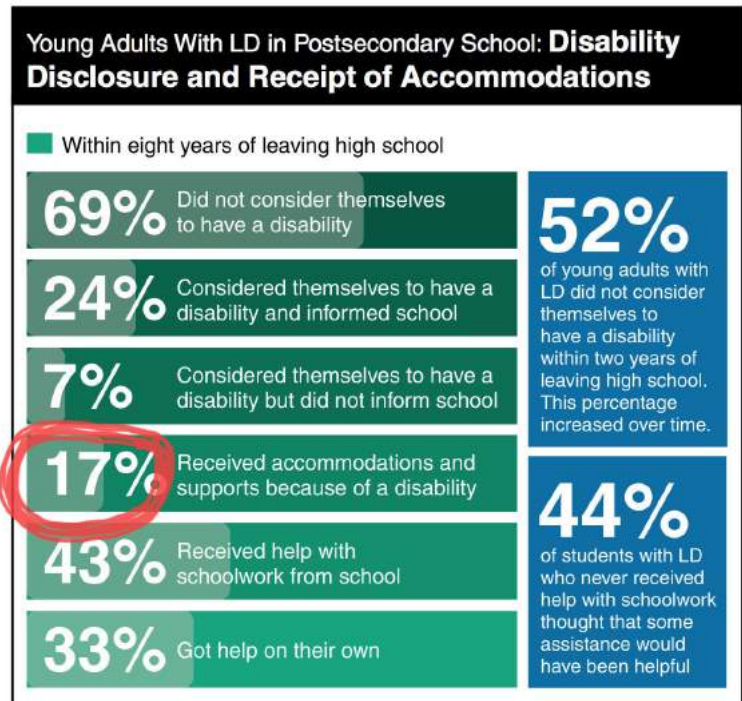
As dyslexic college students are entering 2- and 4- year colleges in increasing numbers, questions arise as to the impact of dyslexia-related challenges on essay writing. The National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 had found that although a majority of LD students in high school requested accommodations (91%), only 17% requested accommodations in college.

A problem with this situation, is that the net result is written work (especially timed written work) will typically substantially underestimate a students' fund of knowledge and understanding.

A recent study at Oxford Brookes University showed that college students with dyslexia matched their non-dyslexic peers in terms of word diversity, ideas, organization, sentence structure, and even grammar. The tasks in which they scored lower than their peers were so-called "low level transcription skills" that included the speed of getting words down on paper (handwriting fluency) and spelling accuracy, and working memory.

Students' spelling accuracy on essays was lower than spelling to dictation; the author speculated that the likely reason for this was that the extra working memory demands of essay writing took its toll on spelling in that context. The authors also noted that the overall percentage of spelling errors was small - at just 3% of the words in the writing samples.

Issues like essay length in the work of dyslexic students matched the length of work submitted by spelling-matched students.



Source: National Longitudinal Transition Study-2, 2011

The need for extended time for dyslexic students was very clear. The average handwriting fluency for dyslexic students approached 12 year old norms although the median age of students was 25 years of age.

In terms of the reading tests done on students, college students with dyslexia read real words at the same level as non-dyslexic students; however, their reading of nonsense words (an estimate of phonological skills) was significantly worse. At the college level, weakness in nonsense word reading is likely to add to the burden of reading and spelling academic technical vocabulary and foreign language words.

The authors finished their report briefly discussing the justification of dyslexic student receiving more time as well as the benefits of word processing and spell checkers. Also helpful was the authors' mention that dyslexic students may also need more time for word processing and that even dictation to a scribe or software program are also not without challenges.

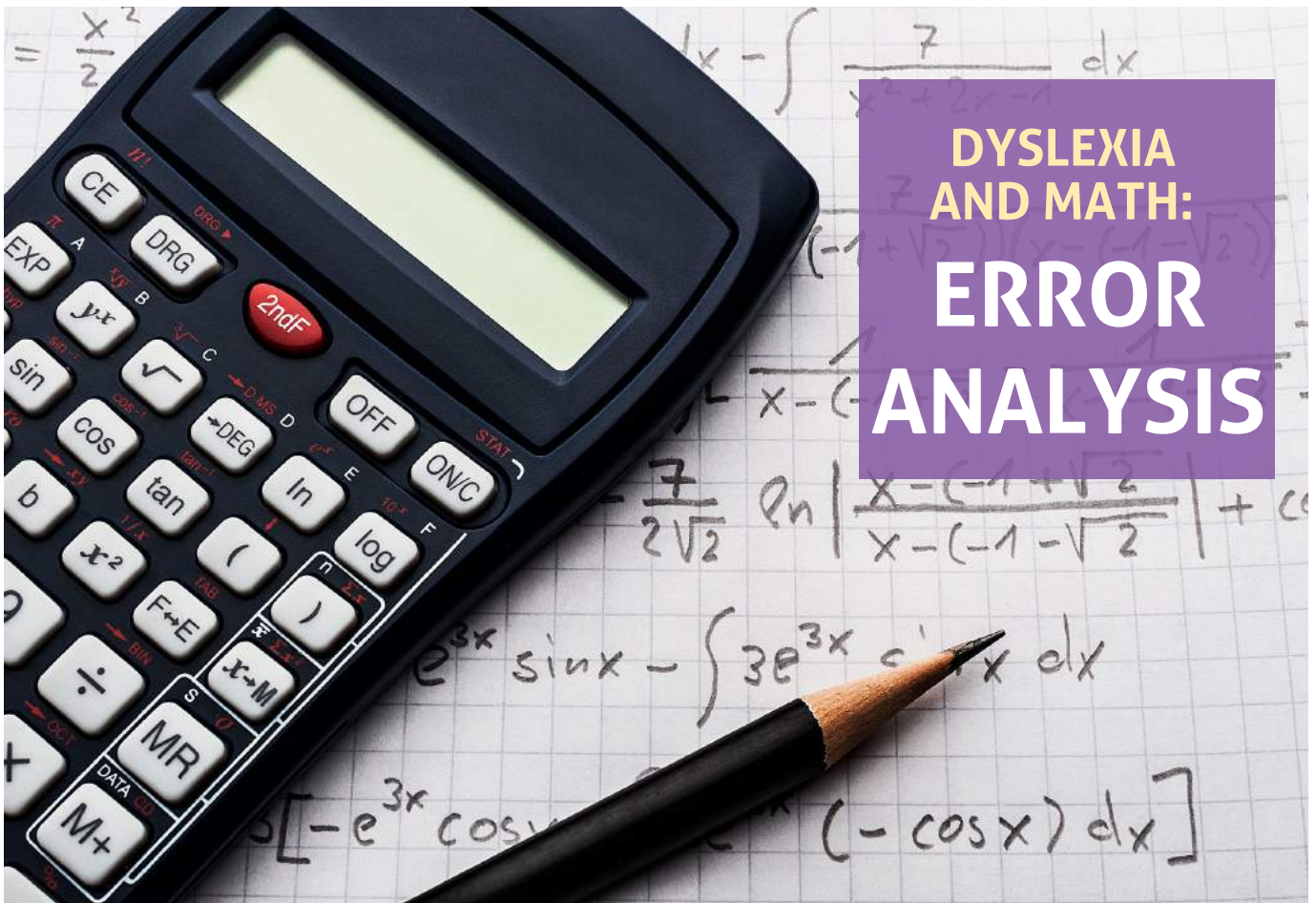
DEVELOPMENTAL NEUROPSYCHOLOGY, 29(1), 175-196
Copyright © 2006, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.

III: COLLEGE STUDENTS

Contribution of Lower Order Skills to the Written Composition of College Students With and Without Dyslexia

Vincent Connelly, Sonya Campbell,
Morag MacLean, and Jim Barnes
Department of Psychology
Oxford Brookes University

There has been a growth in students with dyslexia attending university. These students commonly rate writing as one of their greatest problem areas. Our research set out to describe the effects of dyslexia on the writing skills of students compared to age-matched peers and a spelling-skill-matched group. Generally, the texts of the students with dyslexia were poorer than age controls but not poorer than the spelling-skill controls. However, there were no major differences in "higher order" skills such as ideas and organization with the chronological age controls, only in "lower order" transcription skills such as spelling and handwriting fluency. The students with dyslexia made more spelling errors in their essays than one would predict given their dictated spelling skills.



Some 60% of dyslexic students have problems with math (10% excel at math). Reasons for math difficulties include math facts retrieval, difficulty remembering formula and multi-stepped procedures, sequencing issues, symbol confusion, and difficulty with the language of math. These problems, in addition to timed tests and impossible-to-complete homework assignments, contribute to math anxiety and frustration.

In a collaborative study from the University of Houston, University of Texas, and Vanderbilt University, researchers looked at the different categories of math mistakes in 3rd and 4th grade children with or without math and reading disabilities. On the following page, look at the 4 types of math errors that they examined.

"Specifically, math fact errors distinguished math learning disability children from those with no LD..."

Math Fact

$$\begin{array}{r} 36 \\ + 48 \\ \hline 83 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 264 \\ - 87 \\ \hline 176 \end{array}$$

In these problems, errors are in simple arithmetic, not in procedures such as carries and borrows.

Procedural

$$\begin{array}{r} 83 \\ - 44 \\ \hline 41 \end{array}$$

Smaller from
larger

$$\begin{array}{r} 742 \\ - 136 \\ \hline 616 \end{array}$$

No decrement
with borrow

$$\begin{array}{r} 106 \\ - 70 \\ \hline 176 \end{array}$$

Problems borrowing
across 0 ($0 - N = N$)

$$\begin{array}{r} 607 \\ + 205 \\ \hline 802 \end{array}$$

Difficulty
carrying

Visual-Spatial/Visual Monitoring

$$\begin{array}{r} 111 \\ 6373 \\ + 629 \\ \hline 13002 \end{array}$$

The 6 in addend 629 is
added in both the hundreds
and thousands column

Number Misalignment

$$\begin{array}{r} 1910 \\ 2006 \\ - 42 \\ \hline 19964 \end{array}$$

The 9 in the hundreds
column is used twice

$$\begin{array}{r} 83 \\ - 44 \\ \hline 14 \end{array}$$

Correct answer is 41

Miswriting Numbers

$$\begin{array}{r} 606 \\ \times 16 \\ \hline -598 \\ \hline 128 \end{array}$$

Messy/Overcrowding

Switch

$$\begin{array}{r} 83 \\ - 44 \\ \hline 39 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 59 \\ + 48 \\ \hline 11 \end{array}$$

Switch errors indicate mistakes
switching from operation (here,
subtraction) to another (addition).

Figure 1.
Examples of the Four Error Types Examined in This Study

MATH

Studies of this type are valuable because they also identify which types of errors are more common among students with dyscalculia vs. those who are "low achieving." Student with math LD or dyscalculia were more likely to have difficulty with math fact retrieval as well as make procedural subtraction errors.

The latter in the study referred to errors that students repeated on at least two problems. The importance of recognizing these "procedural bugs" is that once a student learns to correct this error, she or he will no longer make the mistake on many questions.

One interesting (and unexpected to the authors) finding of this study was noted in the following remark:

"The presence of reading difficulties, even when there were no math difficulties, was related to visual-spatial or visual monitoring errors"

The visual spatial errors included mistakes due to misaligning numbers, miswriting numbers, and overcrowding columns of numbers, and 'messy' or overcrowded numbers. These errors may be due to visual spatial problems, but dysgraphia and procedural errors (for instance place value) are also likely contributors for some.

The paper does not address ways to tackle these difficulties, but obvious common sense strategies like calculator and math chart accommodations, use of math mnemonics to help with math facts, extra time, and option to use graph paper for math work and tests are likely to be beneficial.



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Kindle Fires have also added dyslexia-friendly fonts like Open Dyslexic as well as controls to adjust page width and font size. A list of free Kindle books with free Audible narration is [here](#).

For those of you who haven't kept up with the latest changes to Kindle Fire, there are kid-friendly versions (reasonably drop-proof) that come with parent controls and 1 year free membership in Freetime Unlimited (kid-friendly apps, videos, and games from Disney, PBS, etc.).

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Emma chose to receive Jerry Pinkney's Three Billy Goat's Gruff! Great choice! That one has a troll.

Congratulations Emma!

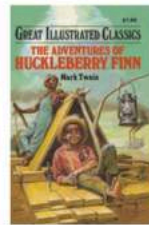
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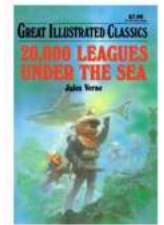
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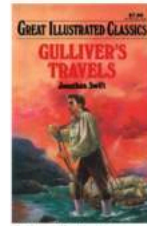
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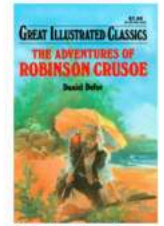
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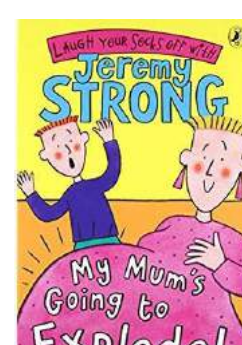
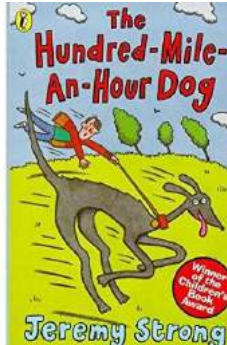
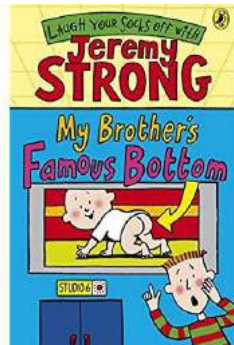
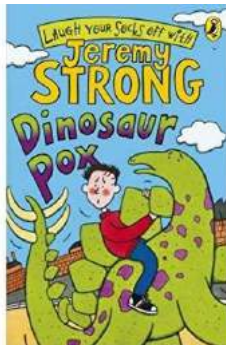
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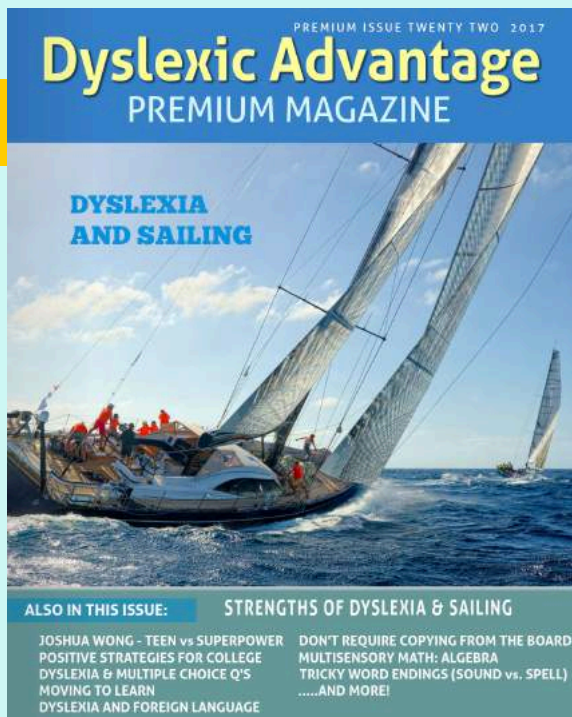
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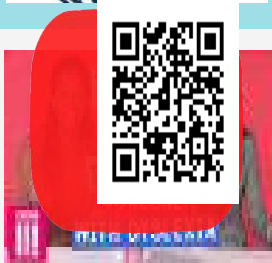
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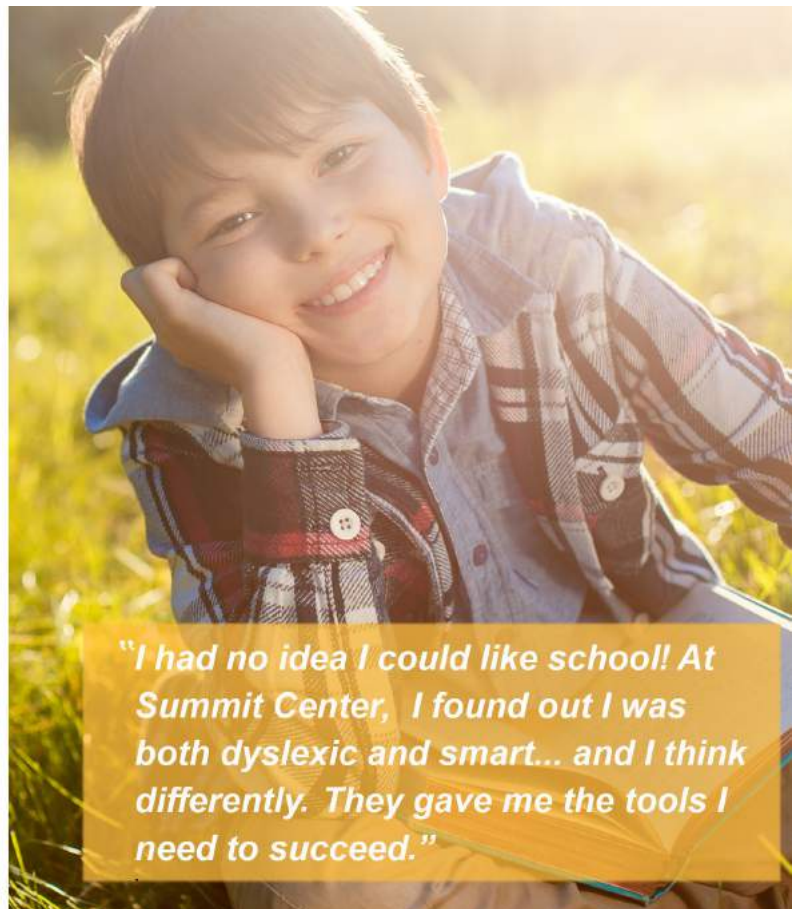
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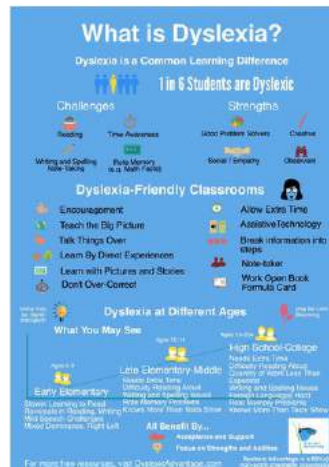


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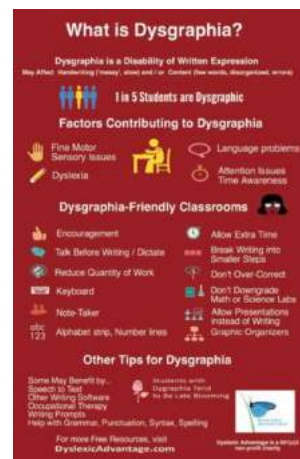
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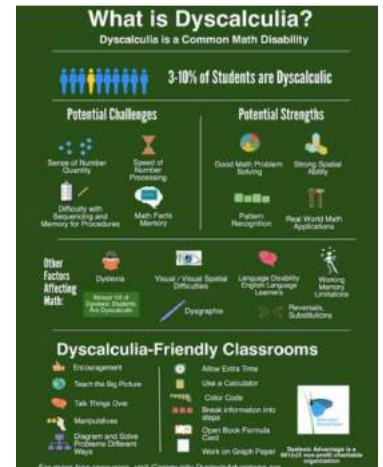
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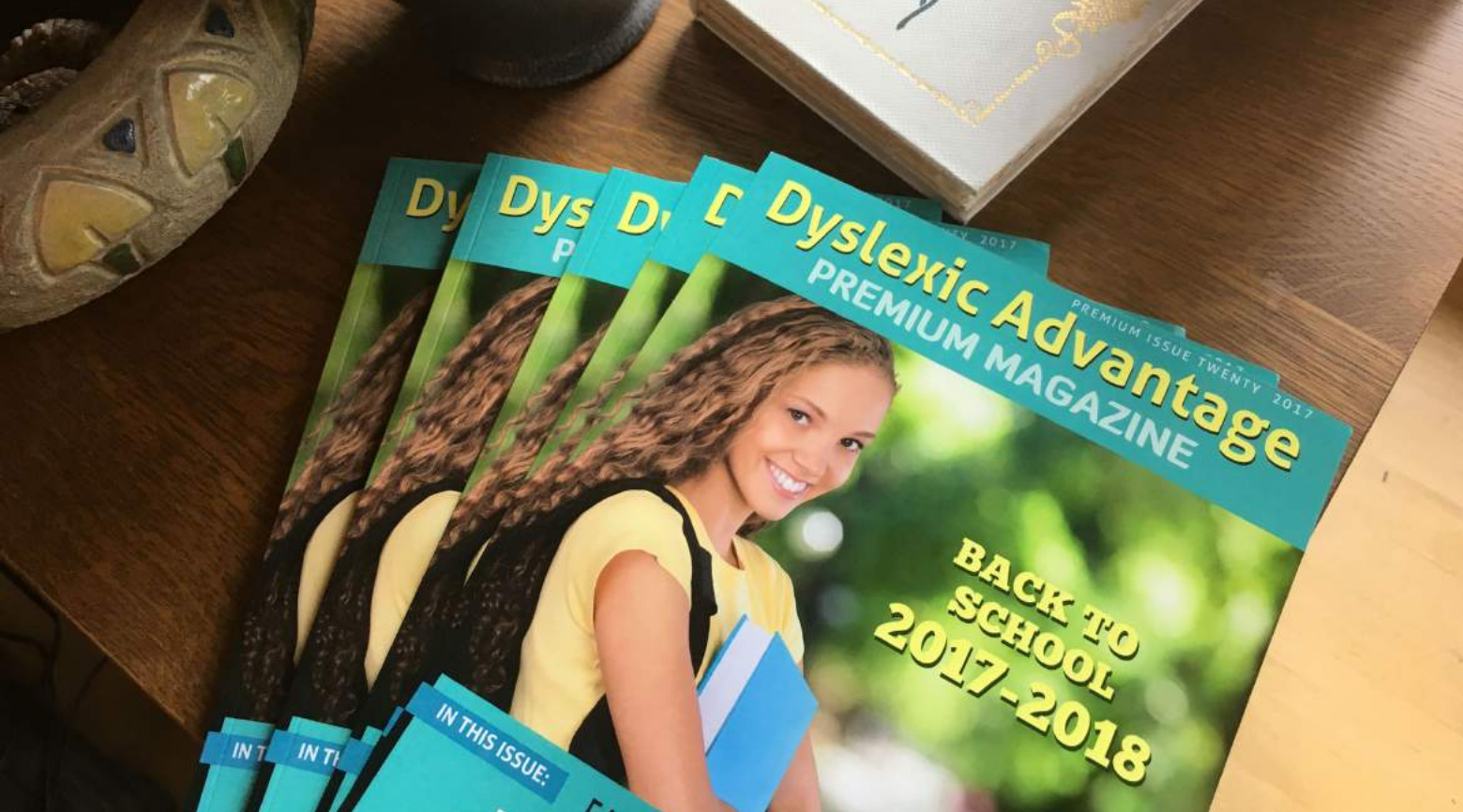
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