

Dyslexic Advantage

NEWSLETTER



DISCOVERY

**UNDERCOVER
BILLIONAIRE
Glenn Stearns**

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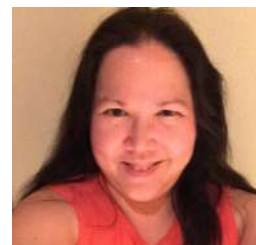
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Recite me



Fernette Eide MD,
Editor

Happy September to all!

It's a busy time for sure. Enjoy this months articles about Glenn Stearns and STEM careers. The reading article may be interesting for you too!

- Fernette

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Thank you to volunteers Trish Seres, Dayna Russell Freudenthal, Michelle Williams, and Shelley Wear for their tireless proofing and feedback. Thank you Lady Grace Belarmino for her beautiful design work and admin support by Sarah Macapobre.

Thanks also to volunteer Dyslexic Advantage Board members Tom West, Tanya Wojtowych, Joan Bisagno, and Brock Eide.

Editors' Note: To ensure that our dyslexic members are able to read our publication without difficulty, our editorial policy is to avoid the use of fonts or typefaces, such as italics, that can impede readability.

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/OU5e>



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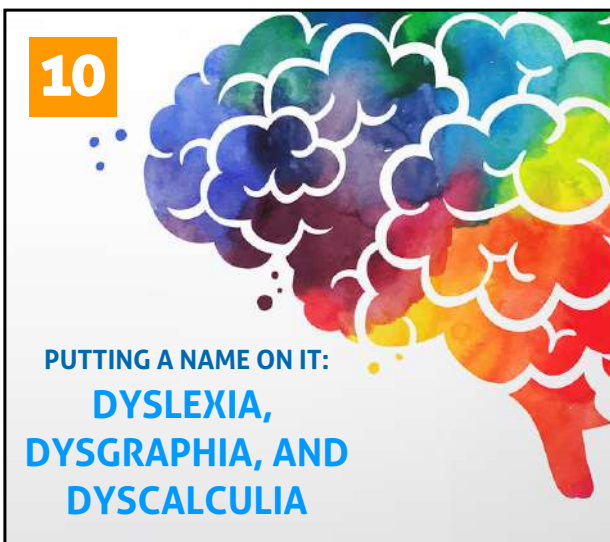
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DYSLEXIA NEWS



DYSLEXIA AND THE UNDERCOVER BILLIONAIRE

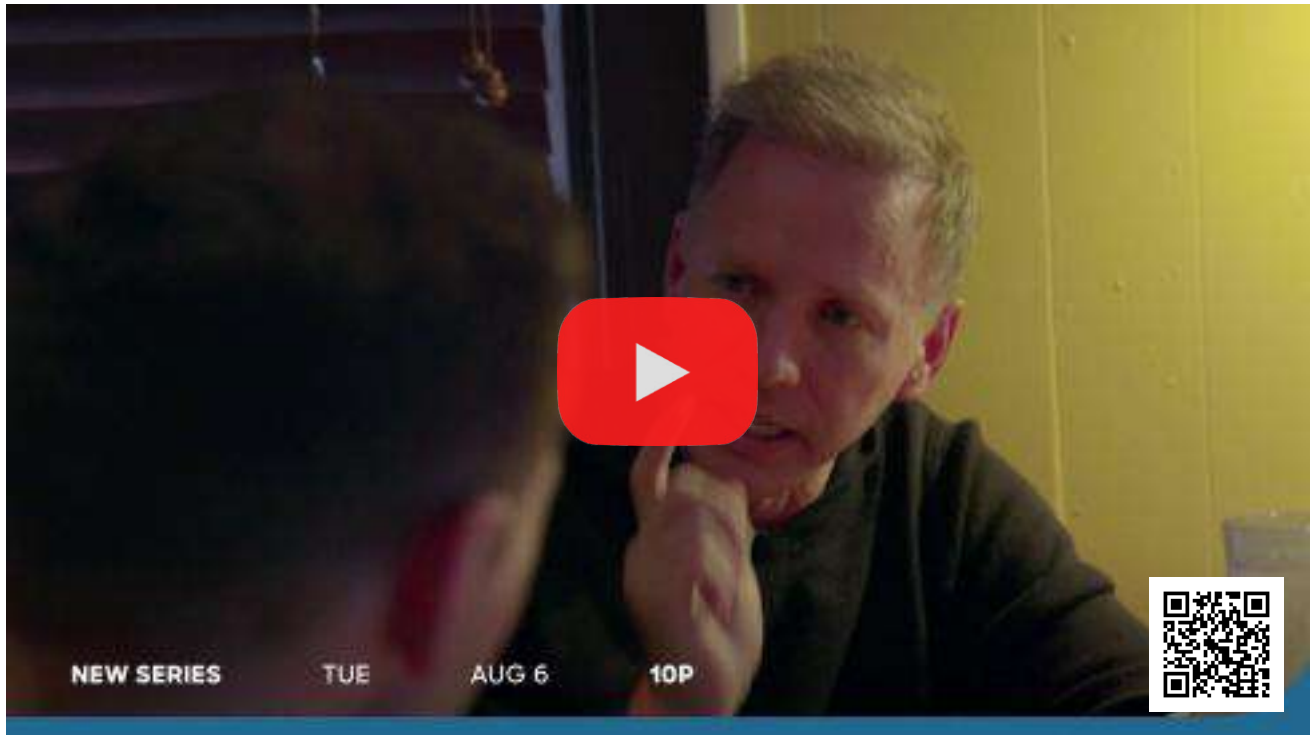
"Take chances. Take risks. Don't be afraid of what's around the corner. Embrace it." - Glenn Stearns

New on Discovery Channel is an 8-part series based on a real-life wager.

Glenn Stearns is a super successful billionaire who overcame life hurdles like growing up in an alcoholic family, struggling in school due to dyslexia (flunking out of the 4th grade), and then fathering a child when he was 14. After getting cancer at the age of 50, he began soul searching and began incubating an idea that he wanted to go for things that really had value for him.

" Why don't go and try to get that job promotion...get out of your comfort zone. Go and do things that'll make you proud when you're done. Even if you fail, you tried."

So he pitched the idea for a new reality show with Discovery Channel, and they snapped it up. With only \$100 in his pocket and an old pickup truck, he would try to create a million dollar business in 90 days. The team at Discovery Channel picked the place: Erie, Pennsylvania. Glenn would have no contacts to help him and no resume. What would happen if he lost? Glen would lose \$1 million wager - but the money would go to the company that he's created.



The series started in August, so we don't know whether he was successful or not - but he's shared a lot of his life story on his [website](#).

Although he graduated in the bottom 10% of his class, he was fortunate to find mentors who encouraged him to aim high. He became the first person in his family to graduate from college and remembers sleeping on a kitchen floor in a 1 bedroom apartment he shared with 5 other recent grads. His early days were like many others. He started waiting tables, then started work as a loan officer, but then became an entrepreneur 10 months later, creating his own mortgage company. By 2010, Glenn's company would manage \$1 billion a month in funding.

"At one point in my teens, I felt like I let the world down and my life was over. It wasn't until I was an adult and learned that often times the best things in life come to you wrapped in packages that appear to be full of failure and disappointment. It's the silver linings that make for the best success and best stories of our lives."

Check out the show on Discovery - hopefully it will be available for demand viewing too.



WOMEN IN STEM: Kim Mann

"I'm dyslexic, which means my brain functions a little bit differently..."



Kim Mann is a software architect, and she might not have found her career path if a 9th grade geometry teacher hadn't decided to allow Kim to solve problems her own way. Up until this point, Kim had always been penalized for using her own ways of solving a problem instead of the method that was taught.

What this teacher did differently was tell Kim that if she could recognize the logical progression between steps, she could get full credit for her work.

"Once I saw the entire path in my head, I would see the shortcut and how to get the answer in the three steps that we were taught in class," she said.

Kim went on to major in Math and developed a strong foundation in Computer Science at the University of Pittsburgh.

Said Kim, "When you finally do something where you get a positive feeling, you want to pursue it more and more... "Young girls need to understand that the stereotypical computer programmer is a dying concept. It's not that you are stuck in a cube, typing away all day. Young girls are not intrigued or inspired by the concept of just sitting in a cube. For me, I often spend at least half my day interacting with other people, because a dialogue is required to find the right solution." (Read more about Kim [HERE](#))

Kim's job is working as a software architect. We've heard of many dyslexics working in this career. Interestingly, a recruiter at a large multinational technology company in Silicon Valley once told us that they were aware that many of their software architects may be dyslexic because many didn't have college degrees.

What is the role of a software architect?

It's a big picture position where a person has to interact with all sorts of people - including customers and clients, product managers, and developers in order to envision, model, and create designs that can be built. A talent at seeing things from multiple perspectives and being able to simplify information down to its essentials are both skills that are especially well suited for software architects. At its essence though, too, is that architects have a knack for solving problems and visualizing solutions.

Work as a software architect involves developing and reviewing prototypes and providing complete technical support of a project from the moment of its start to its final execution.

How can software architects arrive at their positions without attending college? Many learned by doing, working in technical support jobs, freelancing as contractors, and earning technical certifications as needed.

Talented architects have many traits that tech-savvy dyslexics have...they are curious, analytical, and know what to do when systems fail.



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

DON'T JUDGE ME ON MY SPELLING



"It's fascinating how much we judge others on their ability to spell – when in reality most of the time this has little effect on our ability to do our work effectively. If you get an email that no one else will see apart from you and the recipient, does it matter that much? Being clear and concise is more important to me!" - Richard Branson

Dyslexia has a frequent mention on Richard Branson's [blog](#), and there are many who appreciate his call to be more understanding of people who make mistakes while spelling.

"One of the biggest challenges us dyslexics face is how people perceive us from our writing and typing – especially now that we often tap away on our phones more than we talk face to face.

When I was at school I was often labelled lazy and dumb because I struggled to keep up. In the classroom, words just looked like a jumble to me on the blackboard.

More than 50 years have passed and I'm still as bad at spelling as I was at school. I'm not alone with this...My struggles have shaped Virgin as a company – I like clear, direct communication and we have an inclusive culture that is more like a family than a business. It's time to be a bit more lenient with each other and tolerant of our shortcomings. We all have them, whether it's bad spelling, or forgetting to pick up our socks. We can keep working on them, and in the meantime, let's remember that kindness is the most important trait we can all practice every day."

PUTTING A NAME ON IT: DYSLEXIA, DYSGRAPHIA, AND

The school year begins and then there's a lull. The first days of excitement and change are past and now teachers are trying to figure out their students and students are trying to figure out their teachers.

Now is a good time for students to talk to their teachers about dyslexia. The teacher cards **available in our store** are intended to present a big picture overview of dyslexia and ways that teachers can make their classrooms dyslexia-friendly.

The nice thing about the cards is that it can spread awareness and offset the burden that students might otherwise have asking for basics like extra time on tests, assistive technology, and a note-taker.

When some teachers are confronted with a long list of requests, they may think that granting a few accommodations may be sufficient although the partial accommodations really may not be enough for a student to really flourish in class.

What is Dyslexia?
Dyslexia is a Common Learning Difference

1 in 6 Students are Dyslexic

Challenges

- Reading
- Time Awareness
- Writing and Spelling
- Note-Taking

Strengths

- Good Problem Solvers
- Creative
- Social / Empathy
- Observant

Dyslexia-Friendly Classrooms

- Encouragement
- Teach the Big Picture
- Talk Things Over
- Learn By Direct Experiences
- Learn with Pictures and Stories
- Don't Over-Correct
- Allow Extra Time
- Assistive Technology
- Break information into steps
- Note-taker
- Work Open Book Formula Card

Dyslexia at Different Ages

Early Elementary (Ages 5-9)

- Slower Learning to Read
- Reversals in Reading, Writing
- Mild Speech Challenges
- Mixed Dominance, Right-Left

Late Elementary-Middle (Ages 10-14)

- Needs Extra Time
- Difficulty Reading Aloud
- Writing and Spelling Issues
- Role Memory Problems
- Knows More Than Tests Show

High School-College (Ages 15-20+)

- Needs Extra Time
- Difficulty Reading Aloud
- Quantity of Work Less Than Expected
- Writing and Spelling Issues
- Foreign Languages Hard
- Role Memory Problems
- Knows More Than Tests Show

Help all with...

- Acceptance and Support
- Focus on Strengths and Abilities

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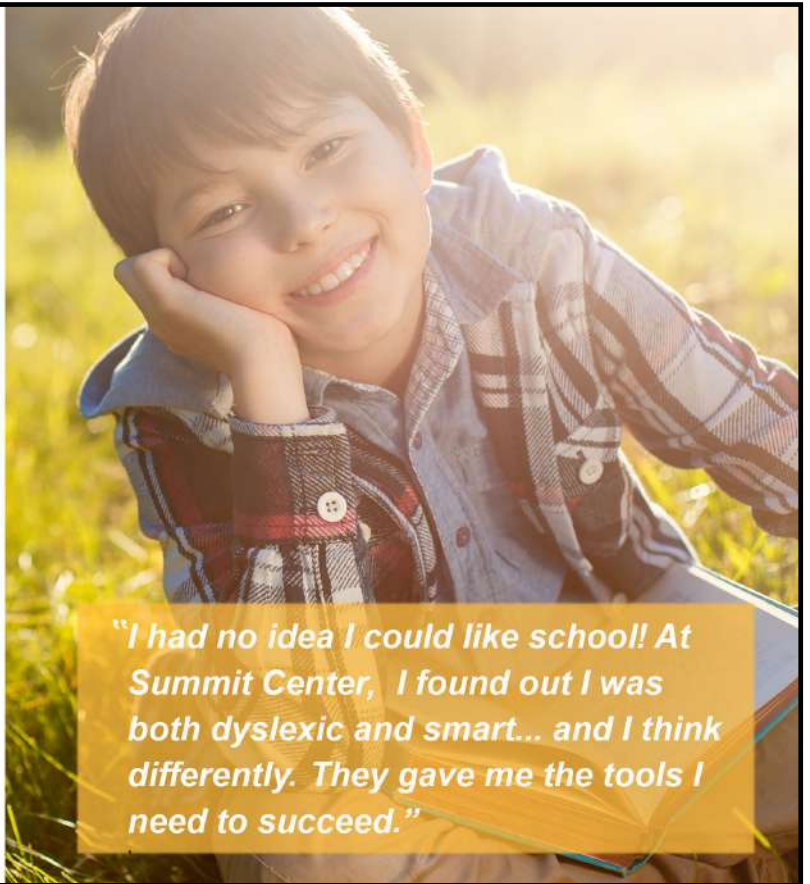


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ADVOCACY

Although an overwhelming majority of dyslexic students have dysgraphia as part of their dyslexia, failure to use this specific label can result in inappropriate work expectations and inadequate supports in routine classwork activities such as note-taking or writing essays on tests.

So many students arriving in college to see what appropriate accommodations look like, ask themselves, why wasn't I getting these supports all along?

What is Dyscalculia?

Dyscalculia is a Common Math Disability

3-10% of Students are Dyscalculic

| Potential Challenges | Potential Strengths |
|--|------------------------------|
| Sense of Number Quantity | Good Math Problem Solving |
| Speed of Number Processing | Strong Spatial Ability |
| Difficulty with Sequencing and Memory for Procedures | Pattern Recognition |
| Math Facts Memory | Real World Math Applications |

Other Factors Affecting Math:

- Dyslexia
- Visual / Visual Spatial Difficulties
- Language Disability English Language Learners
- Working Memory Limitations
- Almost 1/2 of Dyslexic Students Are Dyscalculic
- Dysgraphia
- Reversals, Substitutions

Dyscalculia-Friendly Classrooms

- Encouragement
- Teach the Big Picture
- Talk Things Over
- Manipulatives
- Diagram and Solve Problems Different Ways
- Allow Extra Time
- Use a Calculator
- Color Code
- Break information into steps
- Open Book Formula Card
- Work on Graph Paper

For more free resources, visit Community.DyslexicAdvantage.org

What is Dysgraphia?

Dysgraphia is a Disability of Written Expression
May Affect Handwriting ("messy", slow) and / or Content (few words, disorganized, errors)

1 in 5 Students are Dysgraphic

Factors Contributing to Dysgraphia

- Fine Motor Sensory Issues
- Dyslexia
- Language problems
- Attention Time Awareness

Dysgraphia-Friendly Classrooms

- Encouragement
- Talk Before Writing / Dictate
- Reduce Quantity of Work
- Keyboard
- Note-Taker
- Alphabet strip, Number lines
- Allow Extra Time
- Break Writing into Smaller Steps
- Don't Over-Correct
- Don't Downgrade Math or Science Labs
- Allow Presentations instead of Writing
- Graphic Organizers

Other Tips for Dysgraphia

Consider: Speech to Text
Writing Software with Word Prediction
Occupational Therapy
Writing Prompts
Help with Grammar, Punctuation, Syntax, Spelling

Students with Dysgraphia Tend to Be Late Bloomers

DyslexicAdvantage.org

Finally, Dyscalculia is even farther down the list in terms of being formally recognized in school, although it can be a gateway to higher education and professions that are well-suited to dyslexic strengths.

Dyscalculia is even more important to recognize in today's classrooms as the College Board introduced a calculator-free section on the SAT that clearly disadvantages students with dyscalculia. We've been hearing about a high numbers being denied for calculator accommodations. Having a long and well-documented need may be a necessity.

Cards can be purchase [HERE](#).



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TEST-OPTIONAL COLLEGES

For those who are on the college search or contemplating getting a higher education degree, there are many fully accredited degree-granting institutions that do not require the SAT or ACT.

"Currently more than 1000 schools have adopted test-optional admissions policies."

-US News & World Report, 2018

It's now been 50 years since Bowdoin College in Maine made their admissions process test-optional. Today 25-30% of admitted students have chosen not report scores. In the case of Bowdoin, the Dean of Admissions

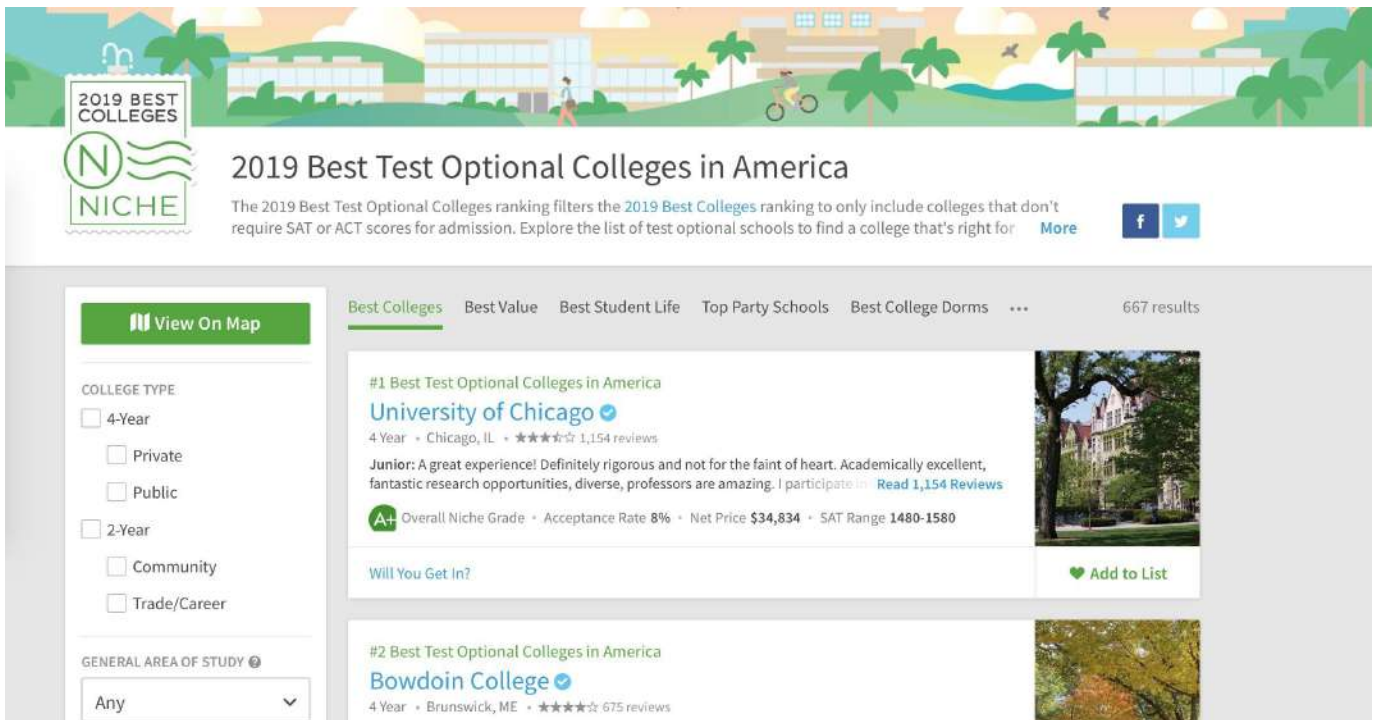
Whitney Soule [says](#), "When the test scores are present, we use them. We don't disregard them. But what we're signaling to students is that we feel for the way we do our work at Bowdoin, what we're looking for, that we can make a very solid predictive academic assessment on the materials we require."

Bowdoin requires two essays, a school transcript, two teacher evaluations and a recommendation from a college counselor.

TEST-OPTIONAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES The key difference of test-optional colleges and universities is that **they leave the decision up to you, the applicant as to whether you want to share particular test scores.** Do you think your test scores accurately reflect your strengths as a candidate? If not, you can apply without sending these schools your scores.



HIGHER EDUCATION



2019 Best Test Optional Colleges in America

The 2019 Best Test Optional Colleges ranking filters the 2019 Best Colleges ranking to only include colleges that don't require SAT or ACT scores for admission. Explore the list of test optional schools to find a college that's right for you. [More](#)

View On Map

COLLEGE TYPE

- ☐ 4-Year
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Public
- ☐ 2-Year
- ☐ Community
- ☐ Trade/Career

GENERAL AREA OF STUDY

Any

Best Colleges Best Value Best Student Life Top Party Schools Best College Dorms ... 667 results

#1 Best Test Optional Colleges in America
University of Chicago
 4 Year • Chicago, IL • ★★★★★ 1,154 reviews
 Junior: A great experience! Definitely rigorous and not for the faint of heart. Academically excellent, fantastic research opportunities, diverse, professors are amazing. I participate in [Read 1,154 Reviews](#)
 A+ Overall Niche Grade • Acceptance Rate 8% • Net Price \$34,834 • SAT Range 1480-1580
[Will You Get In?](#) [Add to List](#)

#2 Best Test Optional Colleges in America
Bowdoin College
 4 Year • Brunswick, ME • ★★★★★ 675 reviews

CLICK ABOVE FOR A LIST OF TEST-OPTIONAL COLLEGES

Some dyslexic students may test poorly on the SAT because the reading passages are intensive with little context given. The ACT, SAT subject tests, and AP tests assess more subject knowledge, which can be a strength for many dyslexic students. The addition of calculator-free section of the SAT would also significantly disadvantage many students who also may not be granted calculator accommodations. In general, the ACT has a higher rate of granting accommodations for learning disabilities compared to the SAT, so that might also influence some decisions. The main challenge of the ACT for some students is the fact that the ACT has a Science section.

TEST FLEXIBLE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES Colleges and universities may differ a great deal in how they have adopted a test-flexible policy, so take care to check each school you will apply to and ask questions of the admissions office staff. Some schools may not require the SAT or ACT, but expect that you have other standardized test scores (for instance from the SAT subject tests or AP exams) or an IB diploma instead .

As always, check with your school directly. Policies also may change. Good luck!



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- Progress monitoring's role in MTSS
- How to build team buy-in for progress monitoring
- How to utilize a progress monitoring data routine

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READING ALOUD and SILENT READING

A recent [study](#) looked at the effect of aloud vs. silent reading on the comprehension of students with a reading disability. The abstract is available at the link, but I was able to find the full text through a public library database. The study raised some interesting issues about reading.

Regardless of the presence of dyslexia, oral reading is known to boost reading comprehension, especially in early elementary school. The reason for this is likely that reading aloud strengthens letter-sound correspondence, in addition to allowing both listening and reading to improve understanding. The benefit is not limited to children. From the paper:

"As anyone who has found themselves mumble reading through the instruction manual while assembling a new vacuum cleaner will attest, even adults revert to reading aloud when confronted with a particularly challenging text. Oral reading is thought to enhance the phonological memory code, allowing students to slow the pace of reading as needed to ensure proper understanding as the message of the text unfolds. Finally, oral reading may help beginning or struggling readers maintain their attentional focus on text and to monitor comprehension of what is read."

Once silent reading has developed to some proficiency, it usually is preferred by readers because readers can focus on content and meaning and not have to master letter clusters and words to sounds. Silent reading at this level of proficiency also makes less demands on working memory - it's quicker and less information needs to be kept in mind.

Up until the 7th grade, many students still show improvements in reading comprehension when allowed to read aloud vs. reading silently, although they may predominantly read silently in class and at home.

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The problem with having dyslexic students reading aloud in class is that at least in a group setting, it usually has negative effects because students are embarrassed, may become anxious, and become the targets for bullying because of reading difficulties. Students can be encouraged to whisper read or instead practice oral reading in their pullout groups, reading pairs, or through assistive technology. In colleges, we've known students who have been able to request and receive special study rooms where they can read aloud and pace if necessary.

In a study of 2nd through 5th grade students at a private dyslexia school, all students showed better reading comprehension with oral rather than silent reading - similar to a finding from a previous study of 3rd through 8th grade boys. It would be interesting to see whether this "better comprehension with oral reading" pattern extends into high school and beyond students.

By the nature of group testing, students must read silently for reading comprehension tests. Perhaps if a student fails a high stakes test, a redo allowing reading aloud should be considered.

UNDERSTANDING DECIMALS

WHY DECIMALS ARE HARD

There are many confusing aspects to decimals that are helpful to recognize when helping students. Contrary to working with whole numbers, longer sequences of numbers are not larger than shorter ones. For instance, with whole numbers, 245 is greater than 2, but .0245 is smaller than 2.

For math processes involving decimals, multiplying by a decimal number between 0 and 1 is also opposite to what one might be used to. After learning that multiplication is equal groups or repeated addition, multiplying $0.3 \times 0.4 = 0.12$, a number that is smaller than 0.3 or 0.4. Similarly, dividing by a decimal can result in a number that is bigger than what we started out with, which can seem even more confusing.

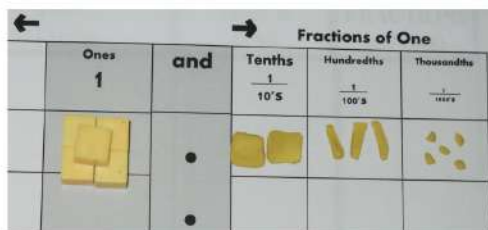
Even decimal addition and subtraction can seem confusing because numbers need to be lined up by their decimal point which may seem different than lining numbers up by the right hand side.

From Marilyn Zecher:

Clarifying the point that decimals are unique fractions based on multiples of 10 can reduce the likelihood of mistakes in the future.

Did Someone Say, “deci-”

- Decimal fractions
- Are another way to write fractions
- They are unique fractions based on divisions by ten
- The ONLY denominators allowed are 10 and multiples of 10:
 - 10,
 - 100,
 - 1,000





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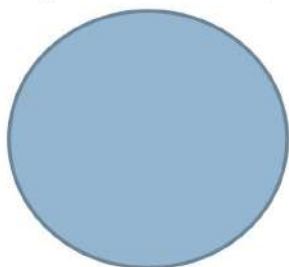
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with
dyslexia**

There is **NO** $\frac{1}{2}$ in decimals!

- In decimal numbers we have no denominators other than powers of ten!
- We have no halves, fourths, sevenths, etc!
- We can create *equivalent* fractions though.
- Divide this circle in halves. Divide one side into 5/10's



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77

Order decimal numbers

- Read and write decimal numbers with appropriate names: three tenths, twenty five hundredths.
- Create **common denominators** by adding zeros!
 - 0.200
 - 0.320
 - 0.003
 - 0.102
- Put the numbers in order easily

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78

What is helpful about Marilyn's approach is that time is given for students to process what is meant by the new way of representing numbers as decimals instead of fractions or whole numbers.

Also addressed are ways common denominators can be represented in the decimal system (especially important before progressing to calculation steps that emphasize "lining up the decimals").

Working with base 10 blocks and area grids can be very important for students in order to develop a solid foundation of the meaning of decimals before progressing onto more complex tasks like comparing decimals, addition, subtracting, multiplication, or division.

In the Khan Academy video below, see how comparing decimals is easier with use of area grids.

The image is a video thumbnail for a Khan Academy video titled "Decimals visual example". It features a dark background with the title "Decimals" in large white font and "visual example" in a slightly smaller white font below it. A large red play button icon is centered over the text. In the background, there are two area grids. The left grid is labeled "0.17" in red and has 17 purple blocks representing the decimal. The right grid is labeled "0.2" in red and has 20 orange blocks representing the decimal. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner. The Khan Academy logo, which is a green leaf-like shape, is in the bottom left corner, followed by the text "Khan Academy" in white.

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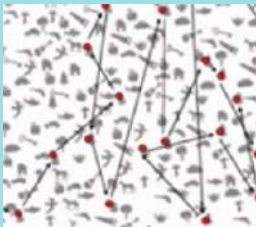
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What is Stealth Dyslexia - Drs. Brock & Fernet Eide at Understood



Text to Speech Easier to Request for Tests GCSE in the UK Schools Week



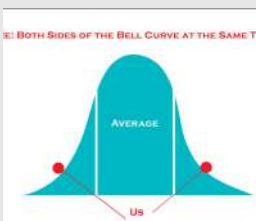
Better Exploratory Behavior in Students with ADHD Nature



Teaching Twice Exceptional (video) Gifted with LD Bright and Quirky



The Fastest Man in the World is Dyslexic Washington Post



What is an Underachiever and Why Are There So Many? Washington Post



Multimedia Learning is Best, But How to Introduce Audio?

Dyslexic Advantage



7 Things for Academics That Can Help Their Dyslexic Colleagues

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PREMIUM TECH ISSUE



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Learning



maths explained

Video tutorials to help with dyscalculia and mathematical learning difficulties

Why Maths Explained?



Devised and delivered by an internationally regarded expert in the field of maths learning difficulties.



The structure of the programme and the principles that drive it are based on research from around the world on how people learn, and fail to learn, maths.



Each video uses carefully designed visual images, matched to the relevant maths vocabulary and concepts in order to enhance understanding.



The videos develop an understanding of maths by addressing and circumventing the barriers that handicap learning. They are about using that understanding to support memory.

Visual images and building understanding

Linking images to symbols/numbers



$$5 + 5 = 10$$

$$2 \times 5 = 10$$

$$10 \div 2 = 5$$

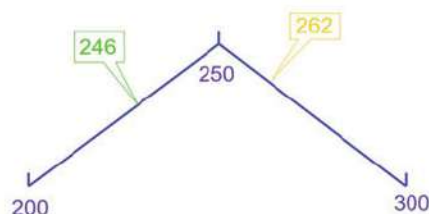
Reversing



$$10 - 1 = 9$$

$$9 + 1 = 10$$

Estimating: to the nearest hundred



CLICK THIS AD TO WATCH OUR SAMPLE VIDEO TO SEE OUR APPROACH



Dyslexia is His Super Power - 9 year old promotes positive dyslexia awareness.

Kitsap Sun



I started talking about disability in my classroom. It changed me and my students.

Chalkbeat

PREMIUM ISSUE FORTY FIVE SEPTEMBER 2019

Dyslexic Advantage

PREMIUM MAGAZINE

DYSLEXIC INVENTION

IN THIS ISSUE: PREP FOR DISCLOSING IN INTERVIEWS

- CREATIVITY & COGNITIVE CONTROL
- SPELLING: TEACHING TO STRENGTHS OR WEAKNESSES?
- DYSGRAPHIA - UNRECOGNIZED CAUSE OF UNDERACHIEVEMENT
- KNOWING WHAT TO ASK FOR: COLLEGE ACCOMMODATIONS
- DYSLEXIA & HIGHER MATH

PREMIUM

RECENT ISSUE



- DYSLEXIC INVENTION
- HOW TO DISCLOSE IN AN INTERVIEW
- CREATIVE & COGNITIVE CONTROL
- SPELLING: TEACH TO STRENGTHS OR WEAKNESSES?
- DYSGRAPHIA: UNRECOGNIZED UNDERACHIEVEMENT
- DYSLEXIA & HIGHER MATH and MORE!

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Click on the video above to see a nice simulation of what it feels like to take notes with dyslexia.

Many dyslexic students can't note-take at all. They can either listen or they can write, but they can't do both at the same time. Although note-taking accommodations are often the easiest to request in colleges or universities, provision for note-taking in middle and high school are often spotty at best and non-existent at worst.

In this era of smart pens and mp3 recorders, there should be little reason for dyslexic students to be required to note-take in class. Having a designated note-taker is often better than recording all their classes though; after a full day at school it may be nearly impossible to sort through audiotranscripts when students get home and have to do homework.

A good system is to have 2 designated note-takers - a backup in case one of the students is absent. Good systems have students emailing notes the same day or copying notes at lunch or a free period and leaving them in a locker or front desk.



PREMIUM

UPCOMING ISSUE



Gifted and Dyslexic
Prepping to Disclose in Interviews
Creativity & Cognitive Control
Spelling: Teaching to Strengths or Weaknesses
Dysgraphia: Unrecognized Cause of Underachievement
Knowing What to Ask for in College
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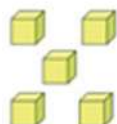


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Inter-relating numbers
and operations + - x ÷

Reversing



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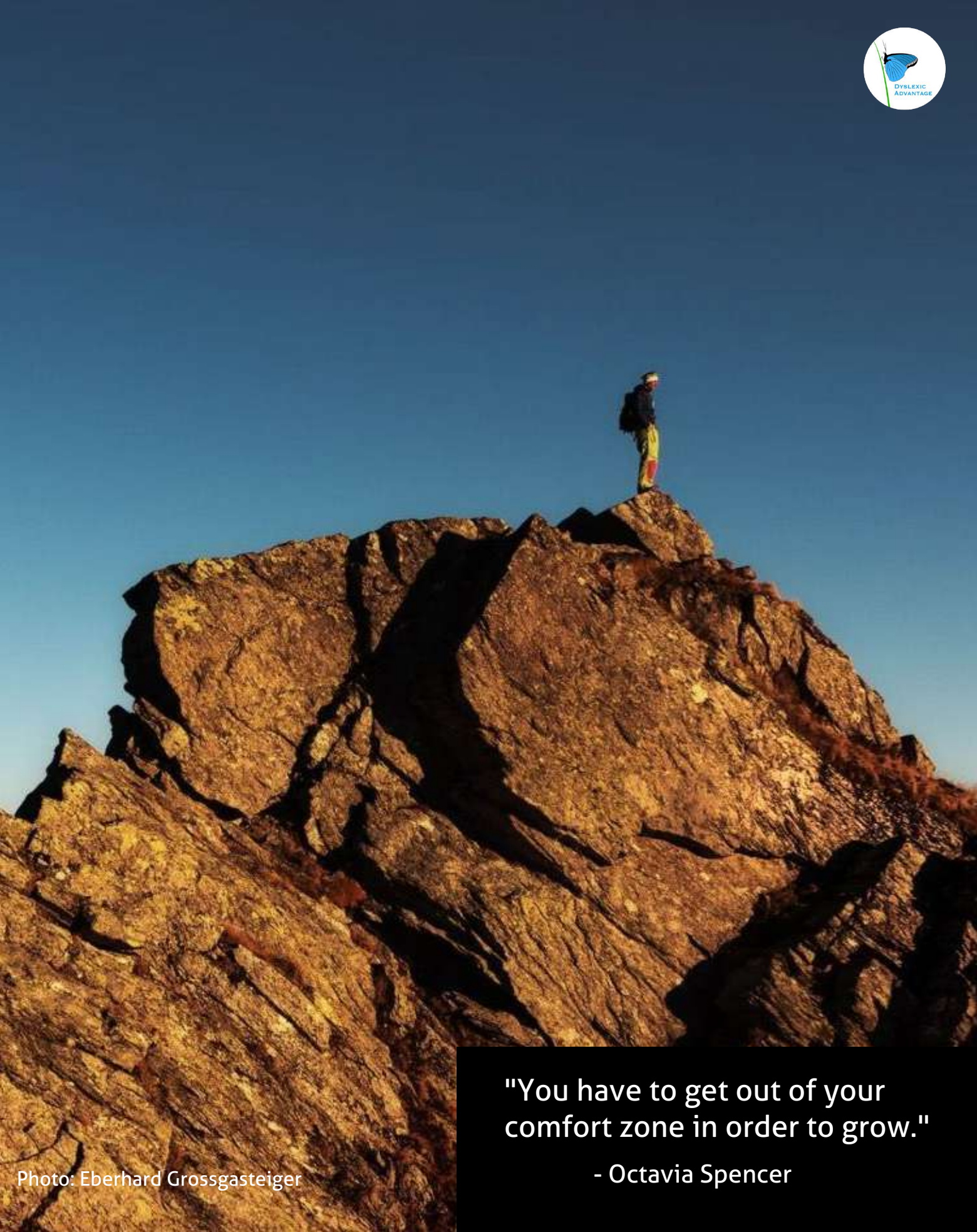
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[CLICK THIS AD TO WATCH OUR SAMPLE VIDEO TO SEE OUR APPROACH](#)



Photo: David Kovalenko

Got a comment or suggestion for a future issue?
Let us know!



"You have to get out of your
comfort zone in order to grow."

- Octavia Spencer