ALL TYPES OF GIFTS

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Dear Friends,

As this year comes to a close, I want to share how much you all have meant to us. From the first feelings Brock and I had when we felt that dyslexia was being misunderstood, to today with 100,000 Dyslexic Advantage books in the hands of parents, students, educators, and other professionals, and dyslexia laws and positive dyslexia events popping up all over the world, the messages of Dyslexic Advantage are taking flight. Thank you for helping change the world together!

Warmest Wishes for You This Holiday!

- Fernette Eide

Visit our wonderful sponsors: Winsor Learning / Sonday System, All About Learning (Reading & Spelling), Scanning Pens, FastBridge, Summit Center, Churchill Center & School, Touch-type, Read & Spell, Recite Me, and The Writers Studio.

We're happy to announce that our partner NEUROLEARNING has launched their iPad-based Dyslexia app for adults and ages 7 & up! The app provides a dyslexia score as well as a report with weak areas and strengths. 3% of profits are donated to Dyslexic Advantage.

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.
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DYSLEXIA NEWS

To learn more about how to activate read aloud for our newsletters, go HERE. The pdf can be read aloud on an iPhone with these instructions.
**DYSLEXIA and ITS GIFTS**

*When I was in school I wondered why I didn't understand; now I wonder why "they" don't understand. My life and my viewpoint are distinct, and I love it this way. Dyslexies are often the inventors, the artists, and the creators. We are the different people who make a difference.*

- Colin Poole

If you really took time to look at the dizzying diversity of creative professionals that make up the dyslexic community, it's simply amazing. There's a lot of nitty gritty details getting students through the long educational process, but we shouldn't lose track of the breadth of gifts that exist in this remarkable group.

In our last Premium issue, we did a story on Steven Spielberg and his lifelong passion for telling stories through moviemaking. Artist Colin Poole also tells powerful stories in his paintings and sculptures and this year was honored with designing the top awards in fantasy arts, the Spectrum Muse.

Then there are real-life dream problem solvers like Bill Lishman who was an early ultralight inventor and flier who also co-founded Operation Migration, a non-profit that used aircraft to guide endangered species and entrain the birds to develop a new and safer migratory route.
There's recent Nobel Prize winning inventor John Goodenough who powered the mobile device revolution with his lithium batteries and James Russell who created the first workable compact disk / DVD.

And don't forget the design genius behind Steve Job's Apple devices, Jony Ive. The Mac Airbook, iOS 7, and early watch. Apple Park was also designed with Jony's clear eye for minimalist beauty and function.
She isn’t the same kid she was a year ago.

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Recently, I had a chance to talk with Ida Benedetto, experience designer. I didn't really know what an experience designer was - but after I learned more I could see how well-suited such a profession was to those who possess dyslexic MIND strengths.

Check out Ida's wonderful talk below for a creativity conference at the Museum of Contemporary Art. Through her work at SYPartners, she's been involved in such diverse experiences as retraining all US Starbucks store employees following the arrest of two young African American entrepreneurs at a Starbucks after not placing an order and designing cooperative experiences for organizations as the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction and the International Federation of Red Cross to help them learn how to work together and problem solve during real complex crisis situations.

What a perfect example of finding one's place in a career that may not have existed when she was in school.
Jorn Utzon, the dyslexic architect of one of the world's most distinctive and iconic buildings is celebrated for his innovation and creative vision by today's leading architects.

The list goes on and on. Dyslexic creation is creativity without boundaries.
● EVERYONE can be an effective multi sensory teacher
● More than 40,000 educators are using the system
● Comprehensive
● Quick to Implement

National Center for Learning Disabilities, the International Dyslexia Association have evaluated the Sunday System(r) and deemed that the program contained the required elements for teaching reading identified by the Nation Reading Panel.
Q & A: MAP TESTING

Across the United States, millions of K-12 school children take the NWEA MAP or Measures of Academic Progress tests. Using a computerized adaptive test it assesses math and reading in the early grades, and language usage and science for older students. By having students take the exams in the fall, winter, and sprint, schools can see if a student is showing progress in his or her classroom.

Q: My child hasn’t been formally identified as being dyslexic, but struggles in reading. How can MAP testing help my student?

MAP tests are intended to inform schools and districts about how a student is progressing in regard to specific skills, like reading, in class. The test is adaptive, so pre-readers will be tested with picture-based questions like listening and vocabulary, while early readers will identify letters and sounds and decode and spell single syllable words. Students who can read longer bits of text can be tested on how they read into a microphone. A comprehension test is also given at the end of reading (for more details, look HERE).

The goals of testing are good - to show whether your student is making progress. If your student scores below the 30th percentile in reading, you and your student's teachers should be trying to figure out why.

School districts will vary in how they use MAP testing so you may have to do some research to see if any changes are being made to your students educational plan.
Some districts use MAP scores to determine whether a student would benefit from a change in RTI (Response to Intervention) tier, for instance, so that can also be an important outcome of the test results.

If your school proposes using test results to suggest holding back your student, then take caution. You might want to pursue specific testing to formally identify dyslexia.

From NASP (National Association of School Psychologists) Online:

"Research indicates that neither grade retention nor social promotion (the practice of promoting students with their same age-peers although they have not mastered current grade level content) is likely to enhance a child’s learning. Research and common sense both indicate that simply having a child repeat a grade is unlikely to address the problems a child is experiencing. Likewise, simply promoting a student who is experiencing academic or behavioral problems to the next grade without additional support is not likely to be an effective solution either.

When faced with a recommendation to retain a child, the real task is not to decide to retain or not to retain but, rather, to identify specific intervention strategies to enhance the cognitive and social development of the child and promote his or her learning and success at school.

Given the evidence indicating that grade retention, when compared with social promotion of similar children, is an ineffective and possibly harmful intervention, “promotion plus” (i.e., combining grade promotion and effective, evidence-based interventions) is most likely to benefit children with low achievement or behavior problems."
Because dyslexic students by definition have average or above-average intelligence, holding them back a grade will force them to repeat intellectual content that they have already mastered in addition to having them repeat an educational program that has already failed them in the area of reading.

Q: My student's doing fine in school (A's and B's) but received a low score on MAP reading? Could it be a test problem?

It could be an individual test problem, like having an 'off' day, test anxiety, or trouble reading test questions, but it could also mean that your student has a reading problem that is being overlooked in the classroom. Because bright students can 'fill in' information by higher order thinking and educated guesses, dyslexia and single word decoding impairment can be easily missed.

Your student should be assessed in a one-on-one situation preferably by a teacher or professional experienced with dyslexia. Some students can 'get by' in class for many years by figuring out what their reading passages say, but their individual word decoding may be weak and problems only seen on standardized tests.
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Q: My student's dyslexia is documented on an IEP. She took the test without any accommodations. Was this a mistake?

A: Our understanding is that very specific accommodations can be employed on MAP testing in regard to dyslexia. For example, as detailed on the NWEA site, K-2 tests have embedded audio for students who want to use it - and it is possible to limit text-to-speech to answer choices only.

What is also true is that custom settings can also add to the confusion that students experience with the test - for instance, when text-to-speech is enabled, the highlighter and eraser are disabled.

If accommodations such as text-to-speech and on-screen calculator will be required, we recommend that students been given a chance to practice with the tools and ask questions about their use.

Regarding calculator use, some students fare better using a physical calculator rather than an on-screen one because of the touch feedback of the keys and their familiarity with using in regular classroom use.

To return to your question, accommodations may or may not be necessary for your student- it depends. To see if your students has difficulty reading (and therefore should get higher tier support, the program should give your student appropriately-leveled reading passages. If she had trouble with reading the instructions or problems reading the different possible answers on the multiple choice tests, then she should have those accommodations in place. The goal of testing is to have the most accurate reflection of knowledge and academic skills for the areas tested; if accommodations are necessary to achieve that goal, she should have them.
Understanding Dyslexia: Identifying, Evaluating and Teaching Students at Risk

Dyslexia is top-of-mind among educators as more and more states pass legislation to provide early screening and support for students with symptoms of dyslexia.

Read this whitepaper to better understand, identify and help these young students overcome their learning difficulties and be successful in school.

Read the whitepaper to learn:
- How to define dyslexia
- Common myths surrounding dyslexia
- The importance of early screening for dyslexia
- Steps for effective diagnostic evaluation
- Effective teaching methods for dyslexic students

DOWNLOAD THE WHITEPAPER

go.fastbridge.org/decda1

www.fastbridge.org
612.254.2534
Unfortunately for many, Algebra really matters...and that's not a good thing for many dyslexic students.

Algebra can be a gate to higher education and necessary for careers in science, technology, and engineering, and some 20 states require Algebra II for high school graduation, although more states are beginning to drop the requirement.

Common Core standards (adopted in 45 states) expect students to master at least some skills taught in Algebra II.

"Why Algebra?"

Employers often expect their employees to translate work-related problems into general mathematical models, from calculating discounts for merchandise to operating technology-based equipment and machinery. Many careers in the fields of science and technology demand high levels of mathematics competence to solve complex problems, such as chemical equations involved in the study of drug interactions. Algebra is also helpful in daily life, from applying formulas for calculating miles per gallon of gasoline to using functions to determine the profit of a business venture." Geller et al., Educational Leadership

So why unfortunately for so many dyslexics?
Algebra is the single most failed course in high school, the most failed course in community college, and, along with English language for nonnative speakers, the single biggest academic reason that community colleges have a high dropout rate. Although 60 percent of students enrolled at community colleges must take at least one course in math, about eighty percent of students never fulfill the requirement. They leave without graduating...Algebra is foundational to formal mathematics, but it is not necessary for many important and useful forms of mathematical literacy. Statistics and data analysis, for example, often come easily to many who cannot fathom abstract algebraic thinking. Over the years, I’ve worked with many superb professional computer programmers who hated algebra, some of whom dropped out of college or even high school because of it....

- Professor Cathy Davidson, City University of New York
Algebra is challenging for many dyslexic students because of its demands on working memory and memorized algorithms, procedural learning and math fact retrieval, confusion with symbols and notation, crowded pencil work, and a sea of variables and word problems.

On the plus side, dyslexic students are good at reasoning and problem solving, so the question is - can Algebra be taught to dyslexic students' strengths while minimizing challenges? For many, the answer is YES.

If your children are young or at least not yet in high school, learning math through multisensory strategies like unifix cubes, tiles, or groups of popsicle sticks can lay the groundwork for Algebra later.

In general dyslexic students seem to learn well with the CRA or Concrete-Representational-Abstract approach to mathematics learning. In this system, students progress from using real-life physical materials, to drawing simple representations, to performing math problem solving with abstract symbols.

For example, from Metz (2011):

---

**Example: Solve 2x + 3 = x + 7**

Begin by using concrete objects:

Represent the concrete objects:
After mastering problem solving with concrete and representation supports, students can work problems at an abstract level really understanding what the steps represent.

Many math curricula use the CRA approach. Here are names of a few --->

Programs Using CRA Approach

- *Applied Math Made Easy*
- *Solving Equations: An Algebra Intervention*
- *Hands On Equations*
- *Singapore Math*
- *Math-U-See*
- *Algebra Tiles*

Video showing simple equation problem solving with Hands On Equations
The CRA approach to Algebra will also work with older students, but because of procedural memory challenges, the earlier the start with number sense (fluidity and flexibility with numbers), the better.

Some high school Algebra instruction may administer instruction almost entirely in abstract symbols, causing students to fall behind right at the start of a school year if the basics are not known well.

Dyslexic students benefit by:

- Prelearning concepts by watching Khan Academy or other videos before new topics are introduced in class

- Explicit instruction and time to learn new Algebra vocabulary

- Color coding like terms in equations

- Color coding x coordinates in one color and y coordinates in another

- Assign different colors to positive and negative terms in an equation

- Release class notes before lecture to allow previewing notes

- Show step-by-step problem solving in handouts

- Digital flashcards (e.g. Quizlet) for math vocabulary terms

- Teach with mnemonics and allow learning with formula cards and "cheat sheet" reviews

- Explicitly teach and model word problems

- Use of graphic organizers with scaffolds whenever possible (next page).
Over four decades ago, Churchill was founded as a place of hope for students and families, a source of knowledge for professionals and a point of pride for the community.

Churchill's mission is to empower students with dyslexia and learning disabilities gain the strategies and confidence they need to succeed, becoming advocates for their future!
For Algebra, graphic organizers can be used for many purposes for dyslexic students as well as their non-dyslexic peers.

At left, the graphic organizer provides prompts for the procedural steps involved in problem solving.

Allow students to work with a correctly solved model before working problems on their own.

The figure below shows several types of graphic organizers that can be used solving different types of problems.

Reference
"Dyslexics like myself can’t learn anything without a narrative to hold on to. Why am I being given this information? What does it do? What is it relevant to? What similar thing should I store it next to in my head?" - Jay Stringer, Book Riot

Jay Stringer has a great post on Dyslexia and Comics and they are good reminders that for many, the gateway to reading for pleasure is a plot that hooks you, intriguing characters, and graphics that pair well with text.

Now, we've talked about wordless picture books before - they definitely can be amazing and stimulate a love for books, but comics also have their place for many children and adults, and that's what Jay captures in his post:

“There is a simple thing you could do for all children as they learn to read, but for a dyslexic it could be life changing; put a comic in their hands.

Comics as a medium rely on clarity and context. They are pictures and words being used in small panels to tell a story. Essentially they are hieroglyphs. It’s a form of storytelling that is as old as written communication. The real art of telling a story in a comic is in giving the illusion of movement between the panels. Things happen, your eye moves
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Free writing
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TTRS Reporting
Track performance and manage student accounts on your smartphone with our new app
How Much Do You Really Know About Dyslexia?

There are some common misconceptions about what dyslexia is — and what it isn't. Test your understanding (and maybe learn something new) in this quiz.

 TAKE THE QUIZ

go.fastbridge.org/decda2
from one image to the next and your brain builds a structure to carry the information. It’s the perfect medium for learning to read."

Jay argues that even today, as an adult, looking at a text on a page does nothing for him unless he can connect it to an image or a memory. At the other extreme, films do too much - giving you everything, all the talking, movement, and emotion. Comics and graphic novels can hit the sweet spot, making you want to read to understand the full meaning of the pictures and to get the clever turns of phrase, the jokes, even sarcasm. He has a point!

From Jay again:

"A comic book trains your brain. It works the right muscles and, if you’re struggling, they can teach you to read. You see images for context, you see the words that go with them, and your mind learns to fill in the blanks. You learn to build the narrative as you go.

As a child, I suddenly got it. I had a structure, a guide for processing the information I was taking in, and where to store it. I had a reason to keep moving through the pages.

If you know someone who is a struggling reader, give them a comic. Give them the best comic in your collection. You might change their life."

N.B. Not all dyslexics will enjoy reading comics due to visual crowding, potential distraction, and clutter.

Want to try reading some comics for free? Check out the free samples here:

Marvel

DC Kids

Comixology Free (Amazon)
Q: My 15 year old daughter was recently found to be severely dyslexic. Her public high school has set her to enroll her in an online high school because her local school can't meet her needs. We've been told that her vocabulary is weak. What program would you recommend?

A. The answer to your question may depend on what structured literacy program she begins and what ways she learns best.

Most structured literacy programs have a vocabulary component which is interwoven with phonemic awareness instruction in the forms of multisensory practice and books based on vocabulary and letter / letter-blend instruction that they've received.

Because non-dyslexic students acquire words as they read, over time if she doesn't listen to audiobooks regularly, her gap in word knowledge will fall increasingly behind non-dyslexic peers. Some students (and even more adults) have difficulty reading along while listening to audiobooks.

Before giving up on that combination, she should try optimizing her ebook reader - choosing a book or books series that she already knows well, slowing down the rate, increasing the font size, and limiting the number of words per lines to see if listening along with reading becomes easier.
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On Voice Dream Reader's site, app creator Winston Chen shared how dyslexic scientist Matt Schneps was able to optimize his e-book settings to listen while reading along.

See his settings at right:

On an iPad - Portrait Mode Dark
Avenir Next 36
Line Spacing 1
Character Spacing 5
Side Margins 180
Voice Amy

One additional tip - instead of reading the word when it's highlighted, Matt found it easier to read along looking just before the highlight.

The reason for mentioning this is that over time, if she can be trained to listen while reading to audiobooks, she can acquire many more words - and words especially from her interests in reading.

For that matter, it's also a good idea to encourage her to look up words as she is reading independently. When reading physical books, she could use a scanning pen that has an audio dictionary; also, some e-book readers have a look-up dictionary. In Kindle Paperwhites, there are vocabulary functions which allow you to look up and store, and make flashcards from words that you come across in reading that you don't know (read more HERE).

Developing a regular practice of reading with an audio dictionary app like this one will also help in her learning new words. She may need to have an app or dictionary that reads the full definition aloud.
Helping Children, Teens, Adults, and Families Realize Their Potential

assessment | consultation | treatment

Summit Center specializes in helping students with complex learning profiles and differences, including kids who may be gifted, and those who might be both gifted and have challenges (known as twice exceptional or 2e). We provide formal evaluations of strengths and challenges and offer specific strategies and recommendations to guide growth and development.

“ar had no idea I could like school! At Summit Center, I found out I was both dyslexic and smart... and I think differently. They gave me the tools I need to succeed.”
In terms of specific vocabulary apps, there are a wide variety of options available, and they may be easy and even fun to add onto her existing school curriculum. Try out free or lite versions whenever possible at first so she can choose which apps will help her learn best.

**Knowji**

Knowji is organized into convenient lists, including a list for academic vocabulary.

Pictures accompany the learning of new words as well as examples of the use of the word in sentences, relevant word parts, and related words.

With Siri, the definitions can also be read aloud, but integration this late could be frustrating depending on the level of her reading ability.

**Anki** is another useful vocabulary learning app which uses spaced repetition as an efficient way to learn words. It is available in all platforms for flashcard learning and is also free.

To be useful, lists of words, including audio, definitions, phonetic pronunciation, and pictures are uploaded into the app. At right is an example of a **free 4000 English word pack** (option to donate) that include pictures and audio descriptions of the word meaning and example of the word use in a sentence.
Karina Eide
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How to Recognize Dyslexia in Children, Including English Language Learners

Patrick Dempsey, Actor and Entrepreneur Talks About His Dyslexia at Bowdoin

Bowdoin Orient

More Reading Wars - we'll discuss in a future issue.

Lucy Calkins: No one gets to own the term "science of reading"

Response to Lucy: This is why we don't have better readers

Reading Matters Blog

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"There’s no learning without trying lots of ideas and failing lots of times...."

- Sir Jony Ive, Chief Designer Officer, Apple