

JANUARY 2021 ISSUE 61

Dyslexic Advantage

NEWSLETTER



MORE LEARNING IN 2021

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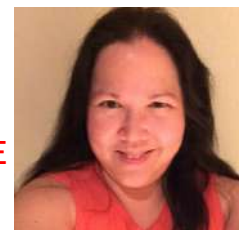
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HOMESCHOOL COURSE



TEACHERS COURSE



Fernette Eide MD,
Editor

DOWNLOAD THIS
NEWSLETTER **HERE**.

Dear Dyslexic Advantage community,
We hope you've gotten off to a good start in the New Year. We have opened all our programs for 2021, including the Karina Eide Young Writers Program (**here**), College Scholarships (**here**) and STEM / STEAM Ingenuity Awards for the Spring (**here**). This month we also have a Book Giveaway: Elizabeth Hamblet's From High School to College: Steps to Success **HERE**.

Thank you donors, sponsors subscribers for your continued support of Dyslexic Advantage! - Fernette Eide and the DA Team

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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.

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.

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/iOVC>



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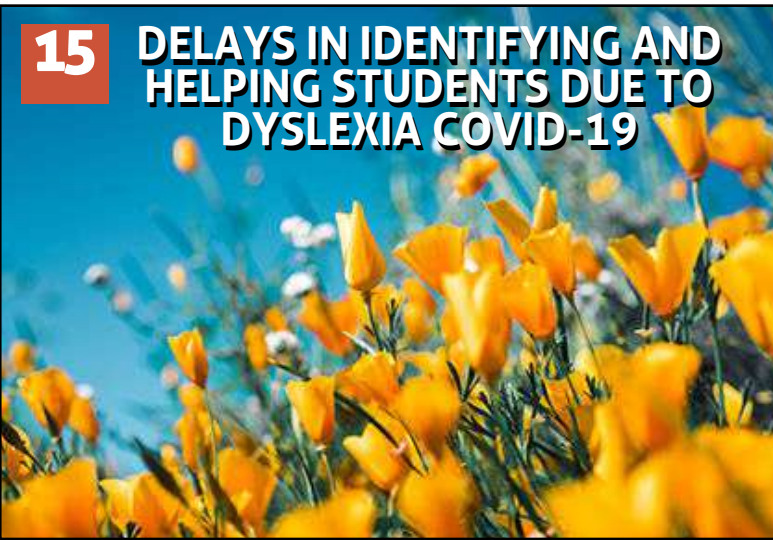
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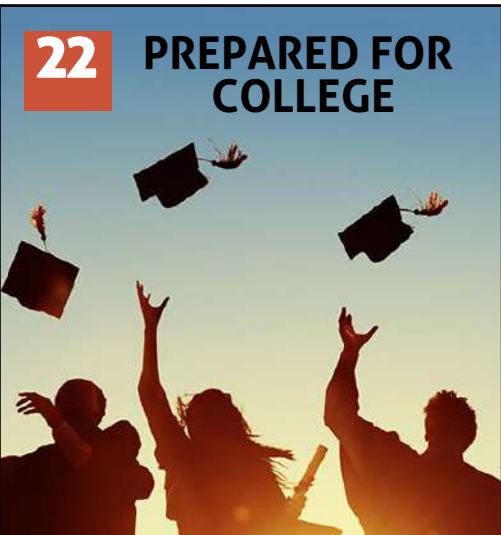
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NEWS





What's ahead for learning in 2021?

Many families are adjusting to the changes imposed by the pandemic and with the roll out of vaccines, hopefully the worst is over. From early reports trickling in, it looks like there has been learning lost in 2020.

RECOUPING LEARNING LOSS

Last fall saw high rates of school regression and increasing rates of failing grades. Applications to college were down sharply, although some college campuses found some stability and other students filled gaps with online learning.

From the Washington Post:

"...Virginia's largest school district, Fairfax County Public Schools, reported that 19 percent of students with disabilities had at least two failing grades, up from 9 percent last year.

Kari Chambers of Prince William County, VA, sees the regression happening with her 9 year old son, who has a reading disability. He struggles to make his way

through a paragraph, blinking in pain and confusion (from Fernet: hopefully someone has checked whether he has convergence insufficiency!). He gets help from his regular classroom teacher, a special education teacher, and his mom, who guides him through his assignments. Nonetheless, Chambers said, he is falling behind.

Her son has begun to write his letters backward again. Pre-pandemic, he could sound out a sentence and copy it down in a mostly legible script...

The national research finds math losses are greater than reading losses.

Experts suggest that may be because math concepts are different each year -- learning to multiply is different from learning fractions..."

MCKINSEY REPORT PREDICTIONS FOR 2021

From a [McKinsey report](#) on the pandemic and education:

"Although students at the best full-time virtual schools can do as well as or better than those at traditional ones, most studies have found that full-time online learning does not deliver the academic results of in-class instruction. Moreover, in 28 states, with around 48 percent of K–12 students, distance learning has not been mandated. As a result, many students may not receive any instruction until schools reopen. Even in places where distance learning is compulsory, significant numbers of students appear to be unaccounted for. In short, the hastily assembled online education currently available is likely to be both less effective, in general, than traditional schooling and to reach fewer students as well..."

The report also predicts low income, black, and Hispanic students are likely to experience the greatest learning losses.

HOW CAN DYSLIXIC STUDENTS BE HELPED?

Really, the answer to this question has to be, "It depends." Dyslexic students vary widely and there is no single educational solution for all dyslexic students.

EDUCATION

What is especially difficult to consider when helping students, is how much to expect from students given the fact that they are stressed out themselves, and trying to focus despite the distractions, worries, and life disruptions.

In general, I would still say try not to worry and give students plenty of flexibility whether they are in-schooling, part remote, full-time remote, or homeschooling.

The dyslexic pattern of learning is often very non-linear. In the early period of learning something, there may be frequent repetitions and "I don't get it", then sudden insight and clearly progress.

Some tips for supporting your dyslexic student in 2021:

- Advocate and support your student in self-advocacy if work expectations are unmeetable.
- Request assistive technology if it is necessary to access information and for your student to demonstrate knowledge.
- Be involved with your student's remote and in-class learning. Many students are reluctant to talk about things they don't do well at school, but you can ask questions such as "Did you know what you were supposed to be doing?" or "Was it hard for you to follow the (assignment, reading, problem)?" Students may attribute mistakes or failures as personal faults or mistakes rather than a lack of accessibility or adequate supports.
- Identify your student's strengths and troubleshoot problems where your student is getting lost or confused about material. Think about ways to cover these gaps.
- If you believe your student would benefit from more one-on-one support or tutoring, then make these requests and see if there are any resources to help your child. Are there family members or friends who may be able to help your child?
- If you itemize your taxes, you may be able to deduct expenses for dyslexia-related tutoring or specialized education. Read more [HERE](#).



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MANAGING WORRY WHEN THERE'S SO MUCH TO WORRY ABOUT



Guest post by
Dr. Dan Peters
Summit Centers

"Let us all maintain positive energy and bring our light to the world. When worry and fear visits, acknowledge it, and let it pass, while remembering that all we can do is what we can do each moment - being the best person that we can be in the face of all circumstances. We will get through this."

-- Dr. Dan Peters

Every day, it seems as if we are being presented with something new — increased COVID cases, businesses closing, schools maybe opening — as well as having to deal with our new normal: wearing masks, keeping distance, not going to our favorite places.

When will I get a vaccine? What if I get COVID? What if you get COVID? Will it be safe to go to school? Will I get to hug my grandma again? Will life ever be the same again? These are just a few of the worrisome thoughts that people of all ages are being barraged with on a daily, if not moment-by-moment basis.

These are also some of the thoughts that the mythical creature, the Worry Monster, puts in our heads to make us scared. Sure, these thoughts have a lot of validity these days, yet we do not need to be a victim to them. We can take action by questioning our thinking, altering our thinking, problem-solving, and working on accepting our new (temporary) normal.

I am not minimizing that we are in a pandemic nor that our lives have drastically changed. I also understand that we are dealing with an incredible amount of uncertainty. And guess what? Uncertainty is the Worry Monster's best friend.

When we do not know what is to come, he uses the unknown to mess with us in a big way by telling us (with our thoughts) all of the things that could possibly go wrong.

The catch is that all of the things he tells us “could” happen (someone I love might get COVID) has not happened yet because it is in the future. If someone in our family unfortunately did get COVID, then it has already happened and the Worry Monster will make us focus on the next worry. That is what he does — tells us things to make us scared.

The good news is that even in the midst of a pandemic we can fight back. We can reduce our worry and fear by taking steps against the Worry Monster. Here are some tools I use in my own life, with my family, and with my clients:

Identify Learning Needs with Remote Assessments

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“Once I read Summit Center’s report, I finally understood why my son was so frustrated. We made the changes he needed, and everything is better now. Thank you!”

Ask yourself what you are thinking — We can usually tell that we are worried or anxious because we can feel it somewhere in our body (chest is tight, headache, weaty palms, stomachache). When your indicator feeling goes off, ask yourself what you are thinking. (Am I worried COVID will never go away?)

Once you identify your thought, you can check to see if it is completely true (which it usually is not) and then alter your thinking so it is more reality-based (masks reduce infection; plus many people and countries are working on the vaccine and it should be out soon). We need to use our thinking brain to overpower our emotional brain when the Worry Monster is messing with us.

Stay present — Simply put, all worry is future-based. When we worry, we are thinking about something that “could” happen in the future. The future has not happened yet, and the Worry Monster makes us spend a lot of time in this unknown place. When we “live” in the future, we are trying to predict events and situations that are out of our control, rather than staying in the present moment — the only thing that actually exists.

Be aware of when the Worry Monster pulls you into the future with “What if” thoughts. Pull yourself back to “right now” and tell yourself that things are fine now, and you are not going to think about something that hasn’t happened yet. Short breathing exercises where you focus on your breath can be calming and reorient you to the present moment.

Focus on what is in your control (and let go of what isn’t) — It is helpful to divide into categories — what we can control, and what we can’t. Just this exercise alone gives people some initial relief. We don’t realize how much time we spend worrying about things we can’t change (COVID cases, school and business openings and closings) and we can choose to spend our time and thinking on what we can control (social distancing, washing our hands, safe outings in nature).

Separating these categories — what we can control and what we can’t — allows us to use our problem-solving skills to impact the things we can and to work on letting go of what we can’t. This awareness reduces the Worry Monster’s hold on us because he wants us to worry about everything and doesn’t want us to know we can take action.

There is no question we are living in uncharted and worrisome times. We need to remember that humans have encountered extreme hardship and adversity since the beginning of time, and now it appears it is our turn. We must take on the Worry Monster and use our skills to reduce the amount of negative influence he has on our lives. We must be aware of the way he works (putting scary thoughts in our minds) in order to take a stand against him. We must empower ourselves to be brave in the face of this tremendous adversity. We must do this for ourselves and for our children. We have a lot of life to live, and we will get through this.



Enjoy Dr. Dan's video on anxiety from the Happy Family conference below.



For more about Dr. Dan and his colleagues, visit [Summit Center](#).



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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.



STUDENTS UNTESTED DUE TO PANDEMIC

A recent [article](#) has sounded the alarm that schools and entire school districts are unable to assess and meet the needs of LD students. As an example, after a math teacher raised a question that a student was dyslexic, a parent initiated a process last January to have her student tested for dyslexia and dysgraphia. After no action was taken through the spring term and summer, the family hired a disability rights attorney in the fall.. Because no testing was performed, there was no IEP or 504, and no plans for individualized instruction or accommodation. Now, almost a year after the initial request, the family has received an email saying that the process may begin...but still no appointments or revised timeline when the assessments may get done.

From the article: "Under federal law, students with a disability are entitled to special-education services to help them learn. With an IEP, students can get accommodations, such as sitting close to a teacher or having more time on a test, based on their needs. IEPs can also protect students with disabilities who may otherwise be disciplined or graded harshly. But in some school districts across the country, the pandemic has halted the proceedings that determine whether students are eligible for these services. Thousands of children are in limbo, without the support and accommodations they need, parents and advocates say.

The districts say they're limited in what they can do. The process of assessing students for special education can be lengthy and often requires a barrage of assessments, including classroom observations, a psychological evaluation and academic tests. Performing these tests safely has often been difficult, if not impossible, during the pandemic.

ADVOCACY

But advocates and lawyers note that the federal government has not significantly altered the rules governing special education: In most cases, students must be evaluated for IEPs upon a parent's request, and typically, the evaluations must start within 45 days of that request and be completed no more than 60 days later.

'Tons of students who need to be started on special-education plans just aren't,' said Elie Zwiebel, program director of Education First at the Colorado Juvenile Defender Center. "School districts are essentially renouncing their responsibility to do so." In California, the governor put a pause on special education timelines for testing that are required by law. Timelines were eventually reinstated, but now with new lockdowns and closings, dates and tests are on hold again.

If you are advocating on behalf of a student, be aware that despite federal guidelines that support timely assessment, there are schools and districts that may not be testing students at all.

Schools will generally accept outside testing, meaning results will be reviewed by IEP teams and other professionals at a school, but there are never any guarantees that all conclusions by outside reports will be accepted. That being said, most schools would like their students to be successful; if they aren't successful in the status quo situation, there will be motivation to add more supports to help students.

If you need more information about dyslexia, advocacy, and ways that dyslexia can impact different subjects, we highly recommend purchase of a [Premium Dyslexic Advantage](#) subscription which will also provide access to all back issues and premium posts, webinars, and videos. If you purchase a subscription for your student's teacher, they may be able to earn continuing education credits as they read.

Many outside professionals are also providing remote testing for dyslexia, so you may be even able to test from home. Some schools may accept the [Neurolearning Dyslexia Screening App](#) reports if you have an iPad, iPhone, Android touch device, or Kindle Fire to take it. Check with your teacher or school.

HOW TO AVOID DELAYS IN IDENTIFYING AND HELPING STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA DUE TO COVID-19



Brock Fide, MD MA
Co-Founder, Dyslexic
Advantage and CEO,
Neurolearning SPC

With news of the disruption in special education assessments across the country, I asked Brock to comment on the situation and share how the **Neurolearning** app could be helpful.

A recent article in Hechinger Report describes one way in which the COVID-19 pandemic has been especially harmful for students with dyslexia and other learning differences. The article's title, **Thousands of families in special-education limbo**, refers not to the back-bending dance but to the state of suspended animation in which many students with special educational needs now find themselves. The article relates the stories of several young students who, since the first wave of school closures last March, have lost access to school-provided neuropsychological and educational testing, and to the specialized services to which such testing serves as a gateway.

In some states, such as California, statutes requiring timely testing have been officially set aside by state government. In other places stay-at-home and social distancing policies have

DYSLEXIA TESTING

made student testing impracticable. In either case, student evaluations already underway ground to a halt, and students with newly recognized needs—often recognized or exacerbated due to the new “distance learning” protocols—were unable to begin the evaluation process.

The article is at its best in describing the problems this disruption in testing causes students. Dustin Rynders, a supervising attorney with the advocacy group Disability Rights Texas, sums up the challenges this way: “A student going without an evaluation means they are going to continue to struggle without the services they need to help turn things around.”

However, the article offers little in the way of practical advice to help the children stuck in this state of limbo. They state, “Experts agree that schools should use available data, even if it’s incomplete, to ensure students at least receive the support educators already know is needed.” But this recommendation applies only to students who have already received evaluations, and beyond this they have no suggestions.

Fortunately, there are several alternatives available that can keep students with dyslexic challenges moving ahead. When a full evaluation is not easily available, the Dyslexia Screening Test App from our company, **Neurolearning SPC**, can be used to identify students at risk for dyslexia with a **high degree of accuracy**. This test can be used on any student aged 7 or older, takes less than an hour to administer, and can be given by an untrained supervisor (parent, teacher, tutor, or school staff person) on any iOS/Apple or android touchscreen device (tablet or smartphone). Even before the start of the pandemic some schools had begun to accept the results of our test in making support decisions on IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) and 504 plans for their students. During the epidemic even more schools have followed this path.

One extra benefit of our testing is that students who show high or very high-risk results on our app test can also qualify for free services with Bookshare.org, the leading provider in the US of electronic texts for use with text-to-speech readers for individuals with print disabilities. However, it should be clearly understood that the decision to use the results of our screening test for such purposes ultimately rests solely with each school, and our test results do not carry the same legal weight as a signed letter from an assessment professional for demonstrating a legal requirement for services.

While the Post article focuses solely on testing and services provided by schools, it is important to remember that parents of struggling students don't always have to wait for their child's school to take action. Neurolearning's screening test can be purchased by anyone in the Apple and Google Play App Stores and can be administered to students at home as well as school. The app provides users with a comprehensive report describing each student's test results. It also provides access to a detailed list of resources that parents can use to begin appropriate intervention in areas like reading, spelling, and writing, without waiting for help from the overburdened schools. So even though comprehensive assessment is now more difficult to obtain than ever before, there's really no reason to let a child get stuck in "special education limbo."

Learn more about the [Neurolearning](#) Dyslexia app [HERE](#).

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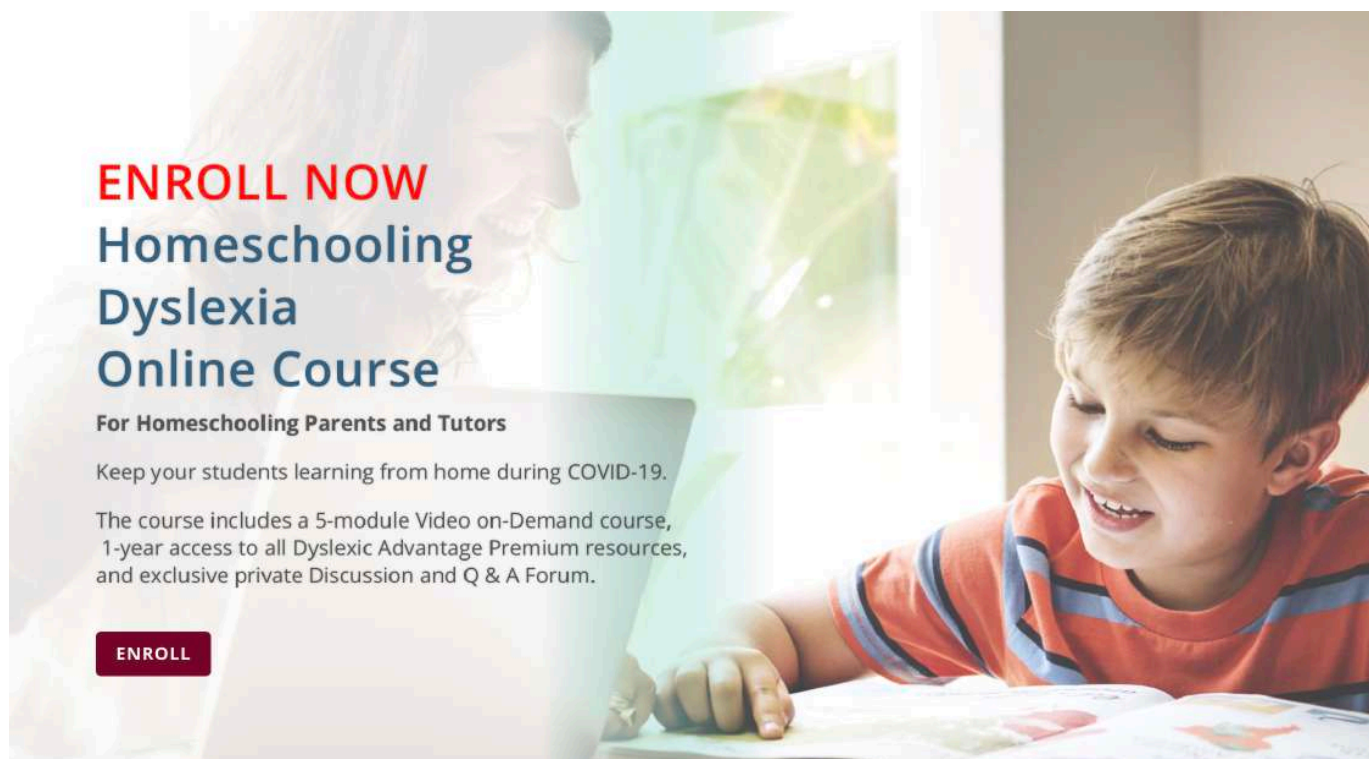
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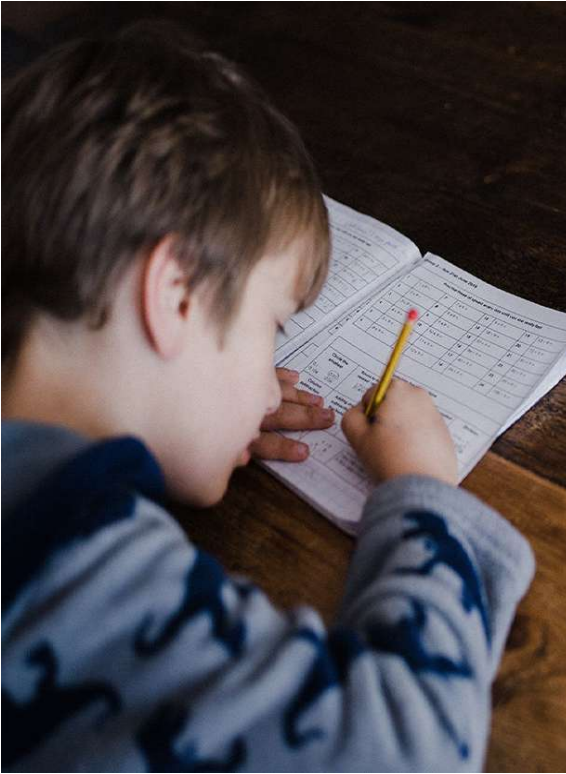
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ENROLL





NOT FALLING BEHIND IN MATH

"The studies vary in how severe they gauge the so-called "COVID slide" to be, but all of them found on average, students would lose more ground in math than in reading. Three studies based on NWEA data predicted students could learn half or up to a full year less math in 2020-21, compared to what they would learn in a typical year." - Education Week

Parents, teachers, and educational experts are reasonably concerned about students' math learning in the midst of the pandemic. Math is incremental, meaning it builds on mastery of other subjects, and it is also a requirement for higher education and many well-paying jobs.

For many dyslexic students, their math needs may not have been even formally identified in the context of their dyslexia, even though studies have shown a high overlap of dyscalculia (40%; Wilson et al., 2015), it is uncommon to see IEPs routinely consider the presence of math disabilities among their dyslexic students.

Math difficulties can impact students in the areas of symbol confusion, reversals, impaired sequencing, working memory, in addition to language aspects.



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MATH

With schools hampered in their ability to monitor the daily progress of their students, and many not able to properly assess students, parents should be vigilant about their students' progress or lack of progress in mathematics.

Often dyslexic students need practical applications of concepts that they are learning and unhurried time to work through problems with manipulatives and math facts tables and cheat sheets as they work to understand what and why they are doing certain steps as they solve problems.

If you are a parent or tutor working with a student, use color coding and large box graph paper as you work through multi-stepped problems.

Custom box graph paper can be downloaded and printed at home [HERE](#).

If you are working with a student who is behind in math, it may seem counter-intuitive to have the student do non-assigned work in addition trying to catch up on school work, but dyslexic students must understand the basic principles behind math operations and steps before being asked to do more abstract number work. Without this foundation being absolutely solid, any information added later will not stick.

If missing assignments are piling up with a student and they are becoming anxious and despairing, try to intervene and support them in a request for a modification in the course. Anxiety, worry, and stress only make it more difficult for a student to show progress. Often when a student is given protected time to work with a parent, sibling, or other tutor, they can make rapid progress if they grasp the principles.

For example, if a student is having difficulty with various math procedures involving fractions, it is best to go to the very beginning, folding paper to represent fractions, then moving onto fraction tiles. Let students work with a fraction tile chart in view as well as with correctly solved similar problems in view.





DYSLEXIA SCREENER

- **Dyslexia Subscale Scores range from 1 to 10.**
- **A score of 5 is average on each subscale.**
- *Higher scores indicate which processing systems or skills are contributing most to elevating your Total Dyslexia Score, and to any dyslexia-associated challenges you are experiencing.*

Your Dyslexia Subscale Scores Are:



Sub Word Processing: 7



Working Memory: 7



Naming / Retrieval: 10



Visual Attention: 7

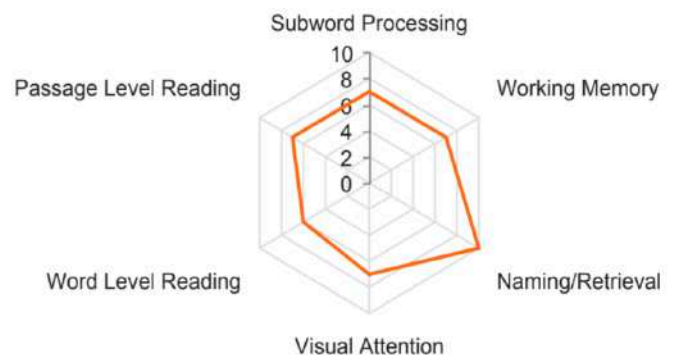


Word Level Reading: 6



Passage Level Reading: 7

Dyslexia Subscale Scores



The radar graph of your scores provides a quick overview of your Dyslexia Subscale Scores. The further a particular score is from the center of the graph, the greater the likelihood it represents a dyslexia-associated processing trait.

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PREPARED FOR COLLEGE: WHAT HIGH SCHOOLER STUDENTS SHOULD KNOW

There are many changes impacting high school students because of the pandemic, but it's never too early to look ahead and prepare for your higher education journey.

Many colleges are back in session, but numerous students are also opting to take gap years. For the most part, colleges and universities are waiving their requirements for college entrance exams, so look for new opportunities if test scores or other factors have previously help your student back.

I recently had the chance to chat about college prep, the college search, and college success tips with Elizabeth Hamblet, author of [From High School to College: Steps to Success for Students with Disabilities.](#)

Listen to my interview with Elizabeth below:



Here are some pearls from our discussion:

- Ask yourself what you want out of college?
Strong department for major, size, weather?
- Research colleges and universities. Do the student success offices list accommodations or documentation requirements?

Elizabeth Hamblet of
LDadvisory.com



APPLY HERE!

There is no minimum GPA. Students must be dyslexic and currently enrolled in a college, university, or technical school and successfully completed at least one semester or quarter of higher education. High school students taking college classes are not eligible to apply.

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COLLEGE PREP

- What are high school requirements for college? Some dyslexic students may receive exemptions for foreign language in high school, but many schools require foreign languages for admissions and this could limit your choices of colleges and universities.
- Are there extra charges for supports like a college coach or tutors?
- Recognize that not all requested accommodations may be provided. If a skill is deemed to be fundamental requirement for a course (for instance, foreign language for majors in international business), then a complete waiver of foreign language may not be accepted.
- Some colleges may allow students to submit their IEP or 504 plan as a form of disability documentation, but neither kind of plan is valid after high school, so colleges don't have to provide the same accommodations written into those plans (though they might do so).
- Foreign language learning in college is often harder in college than secondary school because of how fast it progresses. Some schools and majors may require it to graduate. Learning now in masks may even be harder to hear and pronounce new sounds.
- American Sign Language and sometimes computer programming languages can be used as substitutions for traditional foreign languages at some schools.
- AS SOON AS YOU ENROLL AT COLLEGE, REQUEST ACCOMMODATIONS! There can be delays in processing applications from students and this could delay your materials. Don't make the mistake of failing midterms, then applying for accommodations. Better to ask early and find you don't need accommodations, than to fail exams or classes and make your requests late.
- Recognize the staff and peer counselors in the student success / disability / accessibility offices as your advocates and helpers. They are there to help you and communicate your needs to faculty who may have little training in accommodating the needs of diverse students.

Do listen to our [discussion](#) for lots more great advice! Check out Elizabeth's [site](#) for more great advice!

KARINA EIDE YOUNG WRITERS AWARDS!

SUBMIT BY FEBRUARY 14th! [HERE](#).

COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS

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STEAM / STEM INGENUITY AWARDS

APPLY BY MAY 15th [HERE](#).



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PREMIUM



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Dr Maggie Aderin Pocock Wins Institute of Physics Award

Institute of Physics



Take Our Kids MIND Strengths Survey (for both dyslexic & non-dyslexic kids!)

Dyslexic Advantage



How to Support Middle and High School Students with Dyslexia

Edutopia



Push For More Effective Reading Instruction

KQED Mindshift



Jessica Simpson Talks About Her Dyslexia and Reading Her Audiobook

Today Show



Famous Engineers You Didn't Know Were Dyslexic

Interesting Engineering



Engineered by Dyslexia (Webinar)

IET



Illinois Supreme Court Justice Anne Burke and her Dyslexia Story

The Telegraph



Kansas Changing How It Educates Dyslexic Students

KMUW NPR



Gwen Stefani and Sons - Dyslexia

People



Gershoni Creative: Amazing Dyslexics Virtual Salon Series

Youtube



Reading Proficiency K-2 Trending Down During Pandemic

ARL Now

DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE PREMIUM

Cutting-edge resource for
parents, teachers and
tutors, schools and
universities, and
professionals



NEW! Earn continuing
education or clock hour
credits as you read!



DYSLEXIA FOR TEACHERS ONLINE COURSE

For General Classroom Teachers

- » How Dyslexia Presents
- » What Good Remediation Looks Like
- » Evidence-Based Strategies that Work
- » Ways to Support with Accommodations
- » Gifted, ELL, Social Emotional & more!

CLOCK HOURS & GRADUATE CREDITS



**Dyslexic Advantage &
Seattle Pacific University**



Multisensory solutions for reading.

Online, In-Person, or Both



1. Ease of use

Our six-step lesson plan is comprehensive and easy to follow, with all lessons prepared so teachers need very little prep time.



2. Efficiency

We've designed our program to be implemented quickly. After just one day of training, educators are ready to provide effective multisensory lessons for reading.



3. Anyone can do it

From experienced reading educators to volunteer tutors, anyone can be highly effective using the program.

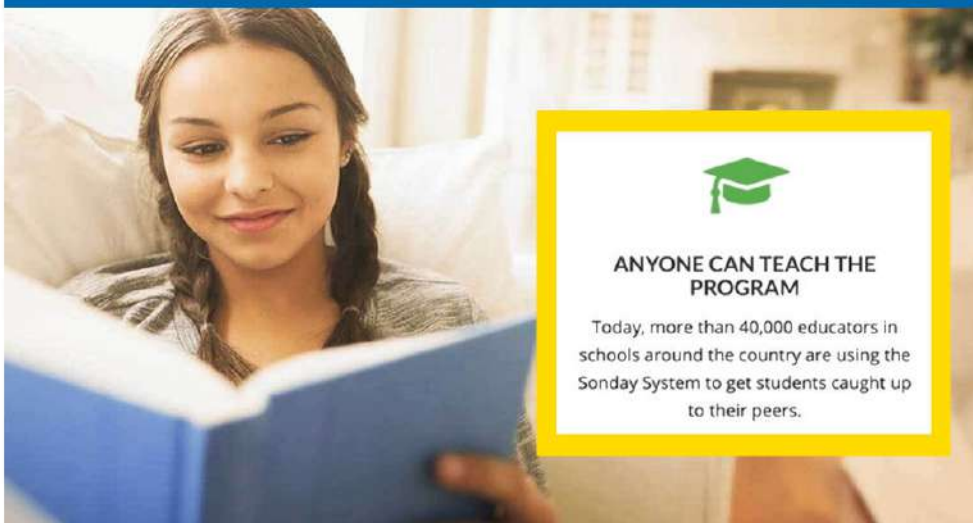


4. Experts on call

Our expert staff is available to provide ongoing support as needed through on-site or online services.



DISTANCE LEARNING RESOURCES



ANYONE CAN TEACH THE PROGRAM

Today, more than 40,000 educators in schools around the country are using the Sonday System to get students caught up to their peers.

Winsor Learning is your headquarters for online reading instruction resources that can be delivered in person or via distant learning.

[CLICK FOR MORE INFORMATION](#)



ENROLL NOW Homeschooling Dyslexia Online Course

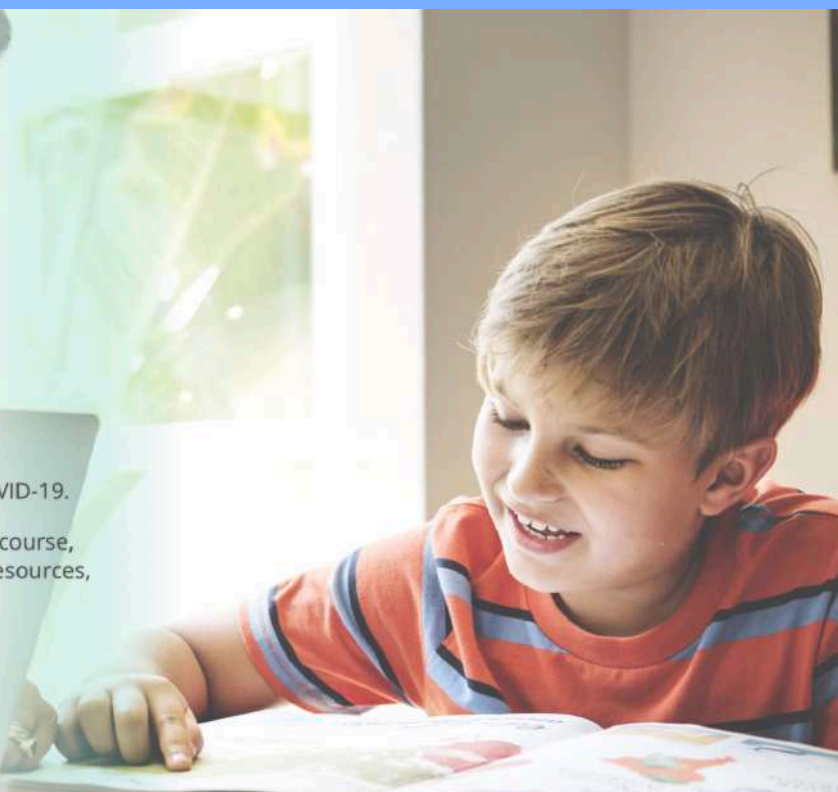
For Homeschooling Parents and Tutors

Keep your students learning from home during COVID-19.

The course includes a 5-module Video on-Demand course, 1-year access to all Dyslexic Advantage Premium resources, and exclusive private Discussion and Q & A Forum.

ENROLL

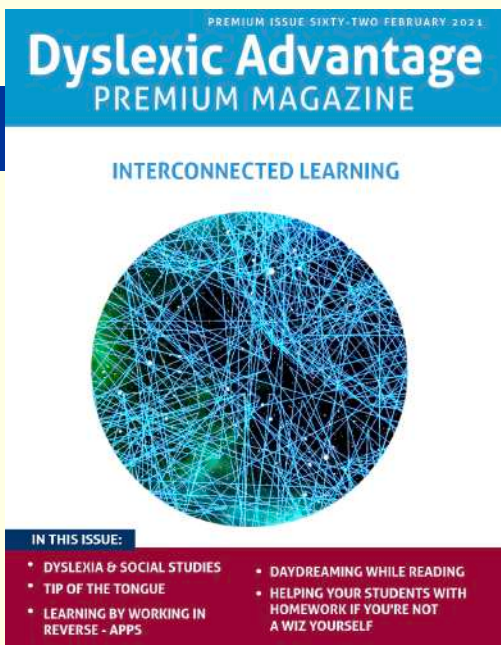
**Taught by
Dr. Fenette Eide**





PREMIUM

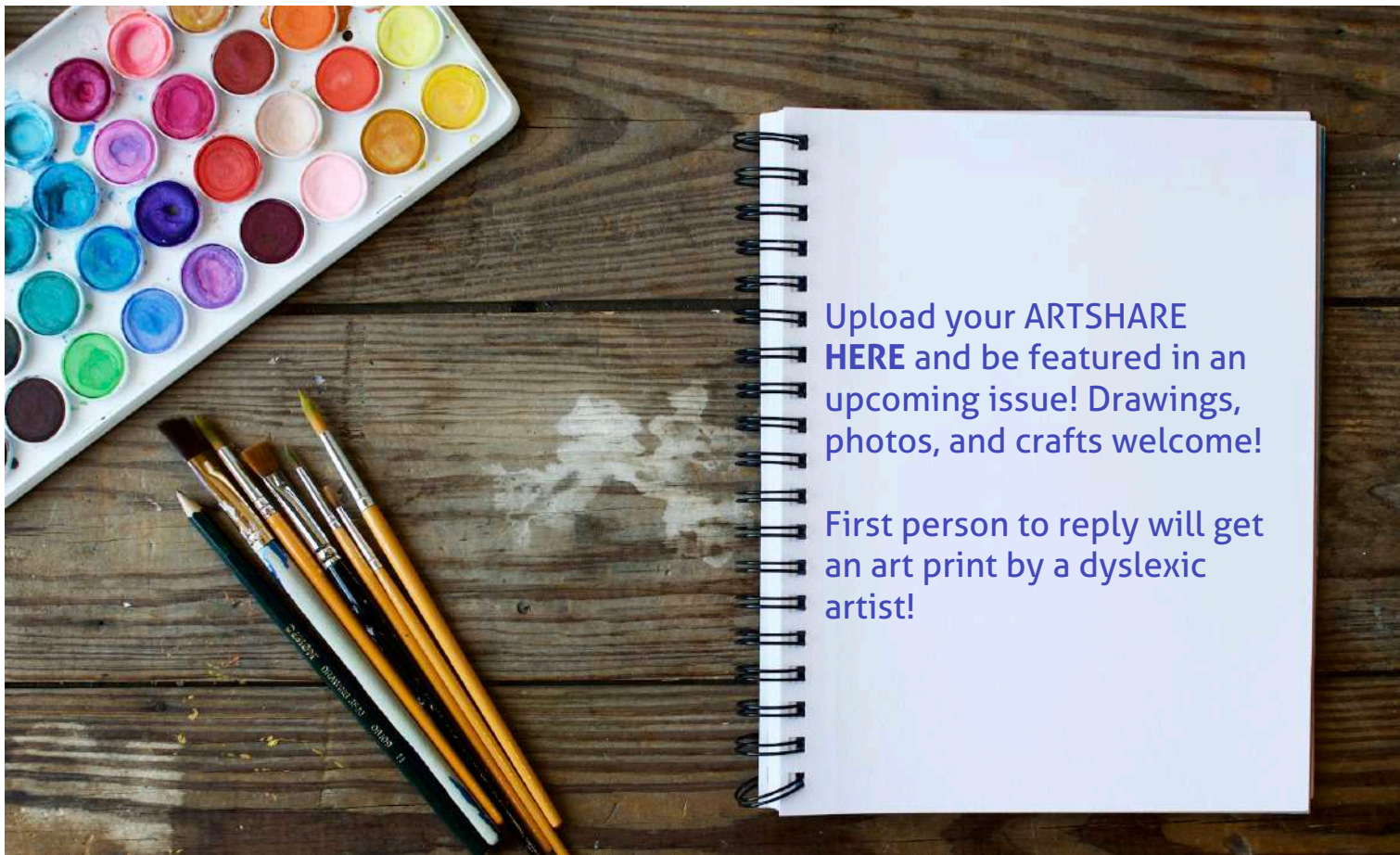
UPCOMING ISSUE



- INTERCONNECTED LEARNING
- TIP OF TONGUE
- HELPING WITH HOMEWORK IF YOU'RE NOT A WIZ YOURSELF
- DAYDREAMING WHILE READING
- DYSLEXIA & SOCIAL STUDIES
- APPS FOR LEARNING IN REVERSE

SUBSCRIBE

**NOW WITH
TEACHER CLOCK
HOUR CREDITS**



Upload your ARTSHARE **HERE** and be featured in an upcoming issue! Drawings, photos, and crafts welcome!

First person to reply will get an art print by a dyslexic artist!



"I've...worked on telescopes on mountains where the stars
make my heart sing..."

- Dr Maggie Aderin-Pocock