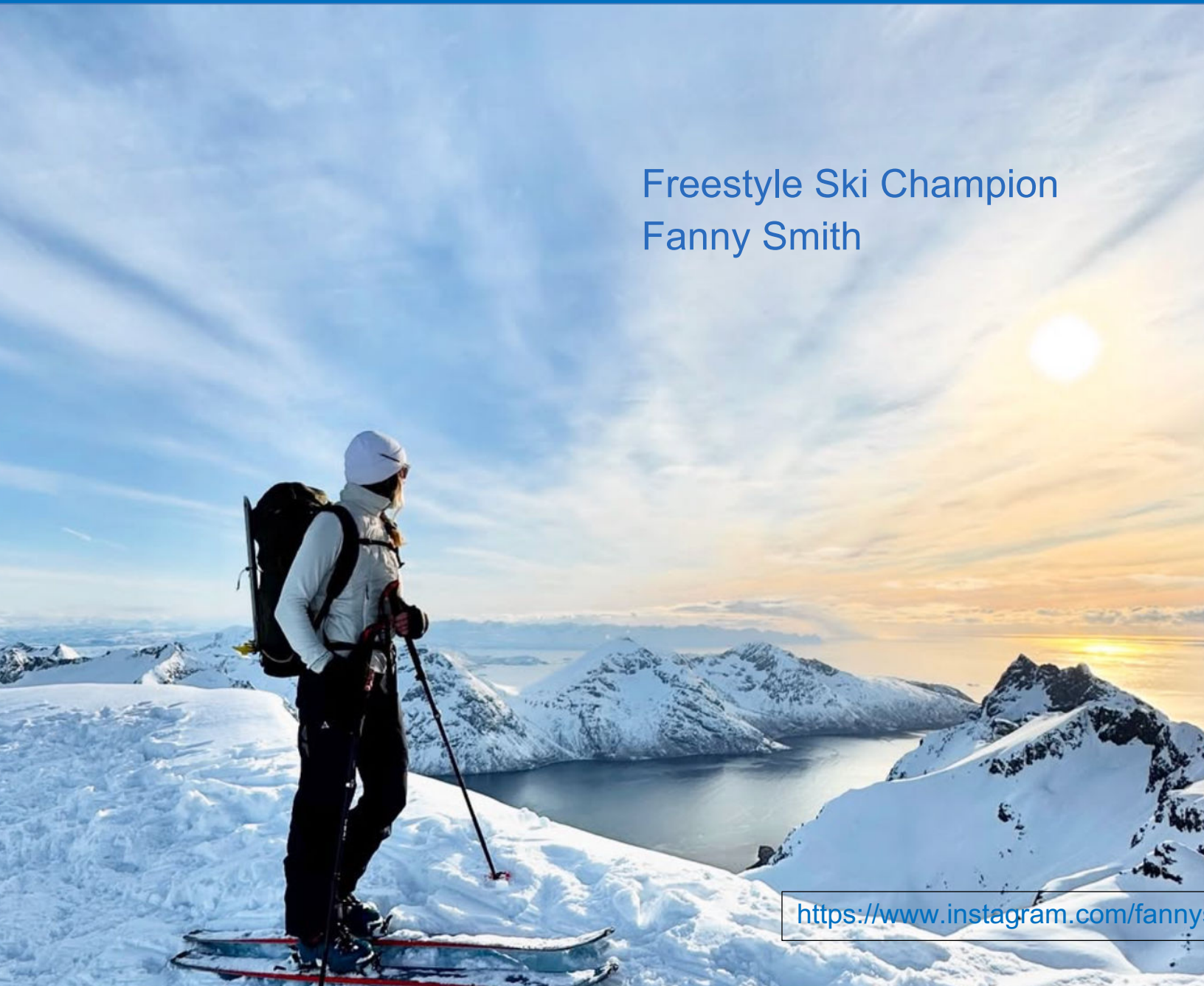


Dyslexic Advantage Premium

Freestyle Ski Champion
Fanny Smith



<https://www.instagram.com/fanny>

- THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF POP QUIZZES FOR DYSLEXIC STUDENTS
- VISUAL THINKING - DOODLING BIOLOGY
- CREATIVITY AND EPISODIC MEMORY
- NEW DYSLEXIA DEFINITIONS EXCLUDE IQ & DISCREPANCY



THE DAILY THINKER

**[WATCH THE
DYSLEXIC
ADVANTAGE MOVIE](#)**

Dr. Fernette Eide
Editor in Chief



Dear Dyslexic Advantage friends,

We hope you have a wonderful holiday season and a smooth start to your new year. The lead article for this issue is knowing about what works for you. I've been in the process of transferring over video interviews – and this message comes in through the hundreds of interviews that we conducted for this community. It's a pivotal turn that unlock many strengths and identify new career and life directions.

Don't forget the [Karina Eide Young Writers Awards](#) will soon be upon us. The deadline for submission of creative writing works is February 14th ❤️ Remember, it's fine to have students dictate their stories and spelling doesn't count:

<https://omella.com/ixvpd>

Check out past premium articles and issues in our online [library](#) and [premium archives](#). We're also reorganizing our premium video archives and all will be searchable through the blue microphone at DyslexicAdvantage.org

Thanks to our amazing editorial team: Trish Seres, Shelley Wear, Cheryl Kahn, Jack Martin, Lady Grace Belarmino, and Michelle Williams.

Teachers, don't forget we have mini-courses for reading, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, STEM and social-emotional [here](#).

If you have any trouble logging into your account or need to cancel, contact the team here: team@dyslexicadvantage.org



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BEGINNING A NEW YEAR

Confidence and Resilience



The beginning of a new year offers something quietly powerful: a natural pause. After the intensity of the fall and the rush of routines, January gives families a moment to reset — not by adding pressure, but by restoring balance and perspective.

For children and teens, this time isn't about resolutions or reinvention. It concerns how they feel returning to school, how confident they feel facing challenges, and whether they believe their way of thinking has value. A positive mindset doesn't mean believing everything will be easy. It means feeling secure enough to try, to make mistakes, and to keep going.

Resilience

Research on resilience consistently shows that children do best when they feel supported and understood by the adults in their lives. When parents emphasize curiosity, effort, and growth — rather than speed, comparison, or perfection — children are more willing to engage and less likely to shut down when something feels hard. Over time, these messages shape how kids talk to themselves when adults aren't in the room.

One message that matters deeply is this: there is more than one way to think, learn, and succeed. Children quickly notice differences — who finishes first, who remembers facts easily, who speaks up confidently. What they don't hear often enough is that different ways of thinking are not only normal, but valuable. Some of the most important insights, ideas, and stories come from people who see the world from a different angle.

Parents play a powerful role in reinforcing this perspective. When adults recognize and name the value of diverse ways of thinking, children learn that their differences aren't problems to overcome, but sources of insight and creativity. This shift builds confidence and resilience — not by removing challenges, but by giving them meaning.

Affirmations

Affirmations can be a simple, effective way to reinforce these ideas. Used thoughtfully, they aren't about forced positivity. They are reminders — steady messages that help children and teens develop an inner voice that is encouraging, curious, and confident. The most effective affirmations feel realistic, age-appropriate, and connected to everyday experience.

Affirmations for Children

- I learn in my own way, and that helps me see things others might miss
- My ideas can be different — and that can make them valuable
- Trying helps me discover new ways to solve problems
- Mistakes help my brain grow and explore new paths
- I ask questions that lead to new understanding
- What makes me different can help me contribute in my own way

Affirmations for Teens

- Learning differently helps me see possibilities others may overlook
- Taking alternative routes has made me more flexible and creative
- My way of thinking can lead to new ideas and solutions
- Struggle has taught me persistence, insight, and originality
- I notice patterns, connections, or stories that others might miss
- I am developing strengths that matter beyond school
- My perspective can make a real contribution to the world

These affirmations aren't meant to erase frustration or eliminate hard days. Their purpose is steadiness—helping young people trust their

minds, value their perspectives, and remain engaged when learning is challenging.

As families move into the new year, the most meaningful reset may be this shift in focus: away from comparison and toward self-understanding. When children and teens know that their way of thinking is valued, they're more willing to take risks, persist through difficulty, and grow into the people they are becoming.

A positive mindset doesn't come from believing everything will be easy. It comes from knowing that who you are — and how you think — has a place in the world.

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STORYTELLING AS A DYSLEXIC STRENGTH

KARINA EIDE AWARDS – SUBMIT BY FEB 14th

Why Dyslexic Thinkers Excel at Storytelling

When people think about writing, they often think about mechanics: spelling, grammar, handwriting, and speed. But long before children master those skills, they are already storytellers. They explain what happened. They imagine what might happen next. They connect events, motives, and consequences into meaning.

Storytelling is not simply a language skill. It is a form of reasoning.

Research in cognitive science and education has shown that humans naturally organize information in narrative form. Stories help us understand cause and effect, remember complex sequences, and make sense of experience. Rather than storing isolated facts, the brain links information into meaningful structures—as what who done, why it mattered, and how things connect.

For many dyslexic thinkers, this kind of narrative reasoning is a particular strength.

Many dyslexic readers rely less on rapid word-by-word processing and more on meaning, context, and pattern. When reading, they tend to focus on the big picture — tracking characters, ideas, and themes rather than individual words. Studies have shown that dyslexic readers often excel at retelling stories, identifying underlying meaning, and making connections across a text, even when their oral reading speed is slower.

This meaning-based approach is closely related to what we've described as interconnected thinking — the ability to see relationships among ideas, events, and systems rather than processing information in small definitional bits. It's not uncommon for a talented dyslexic thinker and writer to struggle with a blank page (or blinking cursor) because they

have too many ideas in their head, rather than too few.

Strengths in being able to see the big picture and how events and themes relate to each other may translate into an intuitive grasp of how a story unfolds, how pieces fit together, and how stories can be told from different perspectives.

Strengths in mental simulation also translate into strengths in story-making. . Because many dyslexic thinkers are able to imagine experiences vividly — picturing scenes, replaying events, and mentally “walking through” situations, there is a direct connection with presenting these stories to others, whether in short stories, screenplays, poems, or film, drama, or animation. No wonder so many of the world’s most talented writers and filmmakers are dyslexic.

Through other means, dyslexic storytellers can move people emotionally through nonverbal means by manipulating images, actions, movements, lighting, and color.

Recognizing that dyslexic students (and adults) may initially process information nonverbally should help explain why writing can be so challenging.

One of the hopes of the Karina Eide Young Writers awards is to provide an incentive for more dyslexic students to express their feelings in words.

Creative stories or poems can be dictated to another person and not typed or written by hand.

If you look at the talented writing of dyslexic students, you can see everything – flights of imagination, a strong sense of writers voices, humor, insightfulness, and gifts of being able to capture moods or multisensory experiences in words. Characters feel real. Moments feel lived-in. Readers or viewers are not just told what happened; they are invited to experience it. These qualities are at the heart of powerful storytelling, whether on the page, on the stage, or on the screen.

Recognizing these strengths helps shift how we think about writing instruction and creative expression. If ideas are rich but difficult to translate into written form, the solution is not to narrow the task, but to widen the pathways. Dictation, collaborative writing, visual planning, storyboarding, and oral storytelling are all legitimate routes into written expression.

One of the aims of the Karina Eide Young Writers Awards is to encourage dyslexic students to share their stories in ways that honor how their minds work—focusing first on voice, insight, and imagination, and trusting that mechanics can follow. When given the chance, dyslexic students consistently demonstrate what has always been there: a powerful capacity to tell stories that move, surprise, and stay with us.

Submit to the Karina Eide Young Writers Awards

by February 14th ❤️

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Dr Fernette Eide Physician and Co-
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Lauren Havel
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Naturalist, Artist, Author, Educator



Krista Weltner
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Illustrator, Puppet-maker



Lily Fang
Animator



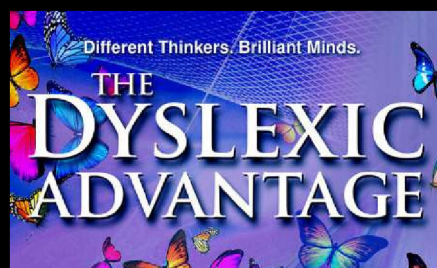
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FREESTYLE SKI CHAMPION FANNY SMITH REGAINS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP AFTER 12 YEARS

Freestyle skiing is a highly creative and demanding winter sport that features jumps, spins, and acrobatic tricks that evolved out of early hotdogging in the 1970's.

Olympic medalist Fanny Smith has long talked about being dyslexic helped her thrive in her career.



“My dyslexia made me a fighter. Whatever life throws at you, never let it stop you!”

- Fanny Smith

Fanny first began skiing at the age of 2. While she naturally took to skiing (first competing at age 12, then becoming a professional at age 16), she remembered “the worst punishment for me was when I had to read aloud in class. You have the extra stress that you are supposed to read quickly...I would see the beginning of a word and say, ‘Ah, it must be that’, then sometimes I would invent the end of it.”

Bullies would tease her and teachers lost patience, but today

Fanny credits her dyslexia with helping her become “the woman I am today.”

At the beginning of the 2011 World Cup season, Fanny had a serious knee injury, breaking her medial and lateral collateral ligaments and two menisci in the front of her knee. Her doctor told her that skiing may be over for her, but she fought back and won the World Cup in 2013.

She continued to race at the international level and, last year, won the World Cup again after 12 years, at the age of 32. She is one of the most successful ski cross athletes in history.

Ski cross and freestyle skiing are extremely demanding sports because the courses are innovative and feature new combinations. Skiers must think strategically about their lines, techniques, strategy, but also creatively respond to what the course presents to them. Ski cross is part of freestyle skiing, but multiple skiers head down a course that includes natural and artificial features like jumps and high banked turns. Ski cross became an official Olympic sport in 2010.

“The first time I tried a course it was like a light went on.

This is what I was made for.” – Fanny Smith

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3iLb7VHtQ8>

WHEN MATH WORD PROBLEMS GO WRONG: THE HIDDEN ROLE OF MATH VOCABULARY

When students make errors in math, the mistake is often assumed to reflect ‘careless mistakes’ weak calculations, or problems understanding math. But for many students—especially those with dyslexia—the problem is not the math itself, but mistakes involving the words themselves.

When many dyslexic students receive comprehensive testing in math, their math reasoning tends to be strong (equal to or higher than their peers), but their math facts retrieval is slow and sometimes inaccurate.

But rarely are students assessed for their understanding or misunderstanding of math vocabulary or syntax, and these problems can grow over the course of their schooling unless they work closely with a parent or tutor on homework and learn why mistakes happened on tests.

Math is a language-heavy subject. Even simple problems rely on specialized vocabulary that students must recognize, remember, and translate into actions. Words such as sum, total, altogether, difference, minus, take away, and subtract all refer to mathematical operations, yet they appear interchangeably across worksheets and textbooks. For a student who has learned only one phrasing, an unfamiliar synonym can create hesitation or confusion about what the problem is asking.

If you consistently review a student’s mistakes on tests, you may find that rather than not understanding concepts, the student misread or misinterpreted the question.

Explicit Instruction in Math Vocabulary

Explicit instruction in math vocabulary is important because mathematical understanding depends on accurately interpreting language, not just numbers. Many dyslexic students will not learn the specific meaning of words through exposure alone.

What that means is that math vocabulary should be taught explicitly – that means rather than modeling problems and how to solve them, lesson should address words used in problems and include sources of confusion as well as word differences. English Language Learners will also benefit by math vocabulary instruction students are having to learn two vocabularies and sometimes words in one language will cause interference with learning a word in the other.

Math Picture Vocabulary Cards

Math picture vocabulary cards should be used to teach vocabulary whenever possible. Students should be allowed to use these picture cards as they work through problems, and teachers and tutors can model precise math vocabulary to help students learn concepts and problem-solving.

As an example, the number $\frac{1}{4}$ should be referred to as “one-fourth” and not “1 over 4”.

Examples of math picture vocabulary cards can be found on sites like [Pinterest](#) or [Teachers Pay Teachers](#).

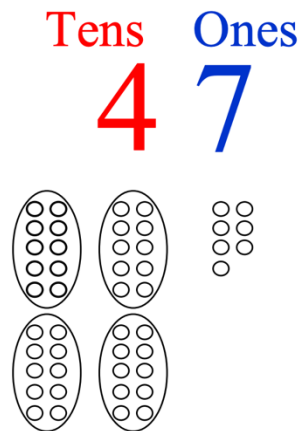
The Virginia Department of Education has free math picture vocabulary cards under “Word Wall Cards” for free [here](#).

Some of them are helpful, like the visual explanation of place value, but some of the cards show unnecessary jargon for young students - for example, “transfer a repeating pattern” with visual confusing pictures of different colored hands, or “transfer a growing pattern.”

Simplicity and coordination of pictures with physical objects or manipulatives is the better way to help students grasp the mathematical

ideas and put them into practice.

Place Value



40 and 7

How many times do you need to hear a new word before it's saved into long-term memory and retrieved easily? [Research from the University of Cambridge](#) suggests that an adult has to hear the word 160 times before it's recognized like words that you have learned forever.

So if you find yourself repeating yourself when you're helping a student with math, don't despair, let students work 'open book' with picture vocabulary cards to work on problems. Growth is non-linear. Often students will be in a flat period where little progress seems to be made, but then all the little bits of information click into a big picture, and they have it!

Want to learn more about math strategies for dyslexic students? Our Math issue will be next for our Premium subscribers! [Join here.](#)



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WHY THE DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE MOVIE IS MEANT TO BE SHARED

The Dyslexic Advantage was created not simply to be watched, but to be used. Its real power emerges when it becomes a starting point for conversation—between parents and teachers, educators and administrators, students and mentors, workplaces and teams.

For many people, dyslexia is still framed narrowly as a reading problem or a deficit to be remediated. This film gently but decisively shifts that narrative. It introduces dyslexia as a different cognitive profile—one that brings challenges, yes, but also distinctive strengths in reasoning, creativity, and problem-solving. For viewers unfamiliar with dyslexia, the film often produces an “aha” moment. For dyslexic viewers and families, it offers something rarer: recognition.

Because the film is accessible and grounded in research and lived experience, it can work well as an outreach tool. It can anchor a school-wide discussion, a professional-development session, a parent night, a library or community screening, a homeschool co-op gathering, or a workplace learning event. Viewers do not need prior background knowledge to engage meaningfully. The story carries them there.

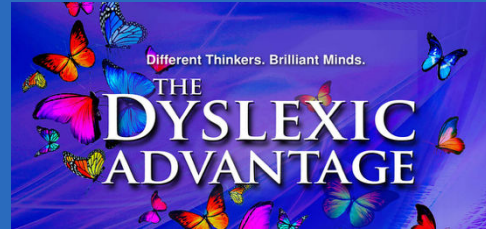
We have seen that when people watch the film together, the conversation shifts quickly from labels to possibilities. Teachers begin to rethink instruction. Parents gain language to advocate more clearly. Dyslexic students see themselves reflected not as problems to be fixed, but as thinkers with value. Colleagues start asking how different kinds of minds strengthen teams.

If you care about changing how dyslexia is understood—in schools, families, or communities—this film is one of the simplest ways to start. A single screening can open doors that years of explanations often cannot.

Be our catalyst.

DYSLEXIC NEWS

Watch Now



[Universal Dyslexia Screening Comes to Colorado](#) – Skyhi News

[Why We Keep Getting the Cause of Dyslexia Wrong - BBC Science](#)

[Eight Research-Based Recommendations for Dyslexia – Discovery Education](#)

[New York Law Creates a New Center for Dyslexia and Dysgraphia NY Senate](#)

[New Dyslexia Academy \(Roberts Academy at Elon University in NC\) – Assembly](#)

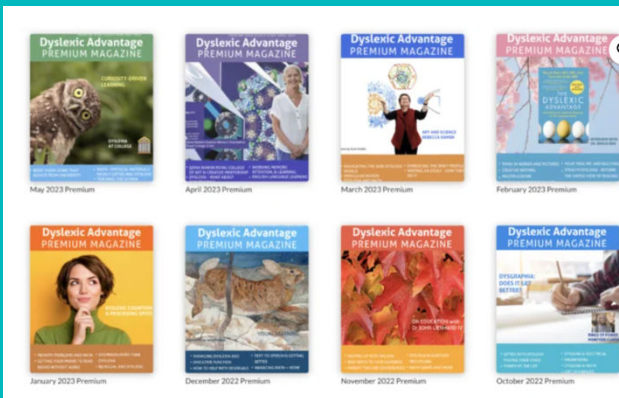
[Neurodiverse Workers \(including Dyslexia and ADHD\) More Likely to Recommend AI Agents at Work – CNBC](#)

[Beyond Language – Audio-Visual Differences in Dyslexia – Nature](#)



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