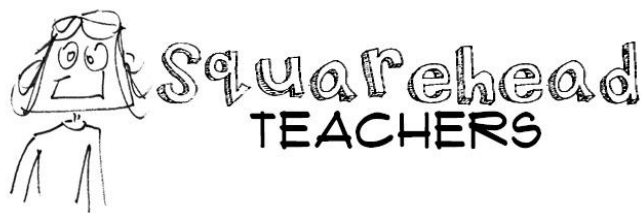


Dyslexia

WHAT TEACHERS (& PARENTS) NEED TO KNOW

Guest Post by Robin



www.squareheadteachers.com

DISCLAIMER: The medical information in this article is merely information - not advice. If you need medical advice, you should consult a doctor or other appropriate medical professional.

PART 1 (Originally posted November 11, 2013)

Intro to this guest post: I don't know very much about Dyslexia, and as a teacher, I should. So I've asked my friend, Robin, for help. Robin is a mother of 4 boys, 2 of whom have dyslexia.

She has been taking her sons to private tutoring and researching as much as she can about dyslexia for the past 7 years. –Mindy

As a Mom, nothing hurts more than to see your child struggling at school. As my first child entered Kindergarten, I had such high hopes for him. I would send him off each day with visions of him making new friends, learning about the world, and learning how to read. Unfortunately, that was not the reality for him. He struggled to complete his work before he could go outside for recess. He struggled to read. He complained of headaches when it was time for homework. And he even has a bit of trouble socializing with other kids. As time went on, reading became more and more difficult for him until I finally realized that it was my right as a parent to ask to have him tested. ADHD was my first thought since he would tap his pencil on the table and

The airboat grew from a barely visible speck, and came spiraling down to land in the clearing. When it was grounded and off contragravity they started across the grass toward it, and the Fuzzies all jumped down from the bench and ran along with them.

The three visitors climbed down. Ruth Ortheris wore slacks and a sweater, but the slacks were bloused over a pair of ankle boots. Gerd van Riebeek had evidently done a lot of field work: his boots were stout, and he wore old, faded khakis and a serviceable-looking sidarm that showed he knew what to expect up here in the Piedmont. Juan Jimenez was in the same sports casuals in which he had appeared on screen last evening. All of them carried photographic equipment. They shook hands all around and exchanged greetings, and then the Fuzzies began clamoring to be noticed. Finally all of them, Fuzzies and other peoples, drifted over to the table under the trees.

Ruth Ortheris sat down on the grass with Mamma and Baby. Immediately Baby became interested in a silver charm which she wore on a chain around her neck which tinkled fascinatingly. Then he tried to sit on her head. She spent some time gently but firmly discouraging this. Juan Jimenez was squatting between Mike and Mitzi, examining them alternately, and talking into a miniature recorder phone on his breast, mostly in Latin. Gerd van Riebeek dropped himself into a folding chair and took Little Fuzzy on his lap.

stood with one knee on his chair during homework time. I was wrong. He has dyslexia.

Dyslexia manifests itself in so many different ways in different children. The only shared trait among dyslexics is that they all struggle to read at levels far below those of typical children of the same age.

For him, the biggest challenge is his processing speed. For others, it might be the reversal of letters or numbers. Many years later, and after thousands of dollars in private tutoring, I know that it is possible to learn to read with dyslexia. It takes dedicated teachers who are willing to be patient and specialize a program to help these children.

Dyslexia, particularly in relation to processing speed, prevents students from moving information from the frontal cortex where learning occurs, to the storage area in the brain which allows them to recall words upon sight (like so many reading programs teach). For someone with dyslexia, a

systematic multi-sensory kinesthetic approach is necessary. The rules of the English language MUST be taught so that a reader can decode a word every time he sees the word. This allows for only a small portion of the millions of words in our language to be put to memory – hence, sight words. Although dyslexia is a neurological difference, it does not affect intelligence. In fact, many kids with dyslexia test at average or higher than average intelligence. Einstein had dyslexia.

Weall seethings the same way.
 Wesee words in groups or
 phrases. Theprint is more
 dominant thanthe background.
 Theprints shows no movement.
 Theprinted letters areevenly
 black.Black print on white
 papergives thebest contrast for
 everyone. Whiteback ground
 lookswhite.

The biggest problem I see as a parent of a child with dyslexia is lack of training and knowledge among our schools. So many teachers do not know how to teach a student with dyslexia so these children are simply put in special ed and given more time to be taught to read in a method that is not conducive to the way that a dyslexic learns to read. There are so many programs which are fairly inexpensive for teacher's to use that are very effective. Discover Intensive Phonics by Reading Horizons is one of them. S.P.I.R.E.is another that is used by the private tutor I take my son to. It is a bit more expensive but still much less costly than many of the programs already being used in schools and special ed classes. There are also many kinesthetic approaches that are helpful for dyslexic students to train their brains to recognize words.

My suggestion for teachers and administrators is to become more educated about dyslexia. Here are just a few facts that might impress education professionals of the importance of learning more. It is estimated that 70-80% of children with poor reading skills are dyslexic, many of whom are undiagnosed. One in every five students overall has dyslexia. Less than one third of students with reading disabilities are receiving school services to address those disabilities.

Robinson and Conway (1988, unpublished) reported significant improvement in subjects using the Landolt test in 1988/90-ward school basic academic subjects, reading comprehension, reading accuracy, but not rate of reading. Adler and Wood (1987) evaluated the results of 17 ten-weeks on 23 remedial high school students and a matched control group. Significant improvement for the experimental group was noted for time needed to locate words on a printed page, timed reading scores, length of time for sustained reading, and span of recall, as well as other perceptual tasks. Additionally, seven of the 23 experimental found employment, but none of the control group was employed by the end of the semester. In contrast, Winters (1987) was unable to find differences in his study. Winters gave 15 elementary school children four minutes to locate and circle 68 examples of the letter "b" on three pages, each page of which contained 600 random letters in 20 lines of

Find out where the local chapter of the International Dyslexia Association meets in your area and attend their monthly meetings. They often have specialists visit to teach methods of helping these struggling children. Become more informed as a teacher so you can help keep these kids from falling through the cracks. You never know, some day it may one of your own children or grandchildren.

PART 2 (Originally posted November 12, 2013)

What does Dyslexia look like?

Do you have a child struggling to read? It might be Dyslexia. It's not just reversal of letters as most people think. Dyslexia manifests itself in a variety of ways. It has been estimated that one in five children of average or higher intelligence have this common learning difference. Look at this list of symptoms. If you have a child who exhibits a few of them, maybe it's time to be tested.

- * difficulty reading unfamiliar words
- * slow, sound by sound reading
- * headaches when reading
- * words moving, shifting, or blurring on the page
- * difficulty with handwriting
- * unable to write alphabet in order or alphabetize
- * reverses or flips letters or numbers
- * writes from right to left or backwards
- * unable to determine dexterity - tries to use both hands
- * difficulty of eyes following text on a line
- * fixating on one word or area of text for longer than normal
- * spells phonetically, often eliminating vowels (HND for hand)
- * poor organizational skills - messy desk or backpack, forgets homework
- * loses concentration and attention quickly
- * makes many errors while reading
- * re-reads text often
- * mispronounces larger words - ambulance for ambulance, pasketti for spaghetti
- * has difficulty recalling a list of items when given the list verbally
- * has difficulty remembering names or objects

- * forgets or doesn't follow instructions
- * knows material but doesn't test well
- * slower than most kids to complete work or tasks
- * difficulty copying print
- * writes in an upward or downward slant
- * difficulty learning math facts, days of the week, months of the year
- * might be extremely orderly or line things up even if it's not organized
- * lack of coordination, clumsy or bumps into things
- * time management problems
- * difficulty remembering left from right
- * difficulty with large or fine motor skills
- * is very artistic, musically inclined, or athletic (right brained)
- * difficulty telling time on a traditional face clock
- * seems to zone out
- * learning to type is difficult
- * learns best by hands-on activities

It was a list similar to this one that helped me determine why my son was struggling to read and succeed in school. His teacher had previously told me that she thought he was just lazy. Look over the list and you'll find that you too might recognize multiple symptoms in your struggling reader. If you are a teacher, ask parents to look at this list. Maybe they will recognize some of the symptoms that you don't encounter at school. If so, refer the child for testing.

The word sare notsp aced cor rect ly.
 We spell wrds xatle az tha snd to us.
 Sometimes all the letters are pushed together

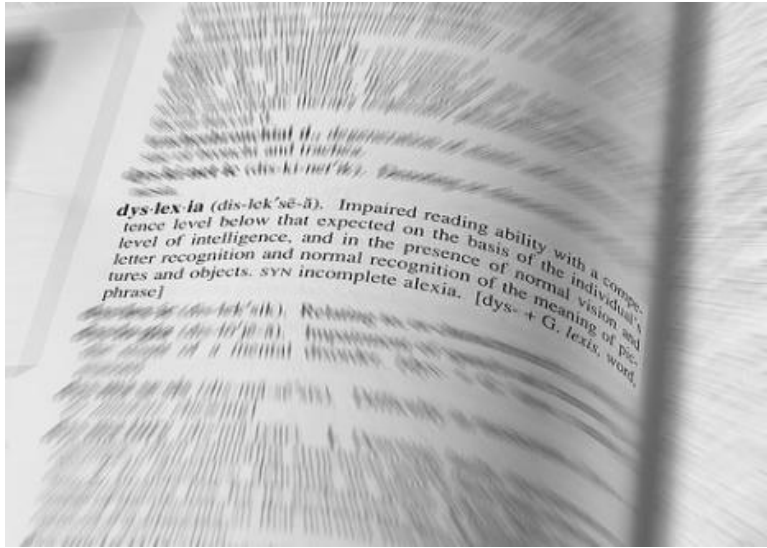
PART 3 (Originally posted November 13, 2013)

Kids with dyslexia learn best kinesthetically. Here is a list of ways to help them learn material if they are struggling with other areas.

- Writing words in the air
- Large invisible letters on a wall with their finger, have them point to where each letter is in a different sequence so you know they visualize the word
- Write on the board in large letters
- Have them write their letters inside a square box so they remember which direction the letter goes.
- Practice tracking with the child using fun finger pointers, a pen, or a ruler
- Play fluency games: a list of letters repeated in a different order on each line. Have them read as many as they can in a minute and see if they can beat their previous time every day. You can also use words as they begin to read more.
- Sand is messy so make a board with fine sandpaper that students can write letters with their fingers.
- Hair gel in a large zip bag gives them a squishy surface to practice spelling words.
- Teach students WHY a word is spelled the way it is, give them a rule to apply or a saying to go with the rule. One of the first that my son learned was the FLOSS rule which states that when a small word with a single short vowel sound ends in F L S (or Z), you double the last consonant. And the word floss demonstrates the rule. Other words are jazz, miss, grass, fluff, roll...you get the idea.
- Give instructions in steps and allow more time to complete assignments or shorten the assignment to help the child feel successful by completing along with the rest of the class.

One final thought. Kids with dyslexia often have distortions when looking at a page with a lot of text. Copy work on to colored paper (blue is the most common to help) to eliminate the stark difference between black print and white background. The distortions are part of what is called Irlen's Syndrome. The Irlen method of using colored overlays or lenses was discovered by Helen Irlen. It is common among people with all kinds of learning disabilities such as dyslexia,

ADD/ADHD, and various other visual processing disorders. The disorder is not only associated with dyslexia, although many people with dyslexia are helped by the Irlen method.



Remember, these are smart kids that just learn differently. Find what works best for them. You will be their best friend if you show that you try to understand them. Encouragement goes a long way with a child who puts forth a great effort that seems effortless to others.

{MINDY'S 2 CENTS: I had Irlen's

Syndrome as a kid. In elementary school, I was in the gifted and talented classes, but I had a hard time reading. I complained of having headaches while reading and said the words seemed to swim on a white page with black printing. My GATE teacher referred us to a specialist from the Irlen Institute who tested me to see how well I did on reading and different tasks when I had colored lenses on. Light bluish-violet was the trick! That particular shade of blue caused no color distortion (when I looked at a white wall it was still white), and my reading problems went away! The specialist said that without the colored lenses (or colored transparency on the page), I wasn't blinking so my eyes would become fatigued. The colored sheets did the trick, and I wore blue-tinted lenses for many years as a kid. This was a relatively inexpensive fix (not funded by the school district) and it did wonders! Turns out, my sister also needed colored lenses (a different shade) for depth perception instead of reading. They weren't the coolest glasses ever, but it made a world of difference in my studies, self-confidence and ability to get through scholastic tasks. Now I don't really seem to have the problem, but boy am I glad my teacher knew enough about Irlen's Syndrome, dyslexia and other learning circumstances to suggest this to my mom.}

**What dyslexics
see when reading.**

PART 4 (Originally posted November 14, 2013)

Famous people who are dyslexic (and these are only the ones whose names I recognized):

Whoopi Goldberg

Henry Winkler*

Tom Cruise

Jay Leno

Danny Glover

Orlando Bloom

Alexander Graham Bell

Albert Einstein

Thomas Edison

Cher

John Lennon

Bruce Jenner

Muhammad Ali

Magic Johnson

George Washington

Woodrow Wilson

Andrew Jackson

Nelson Rockefeller

Hans Christina Anderson

Agatha Christie

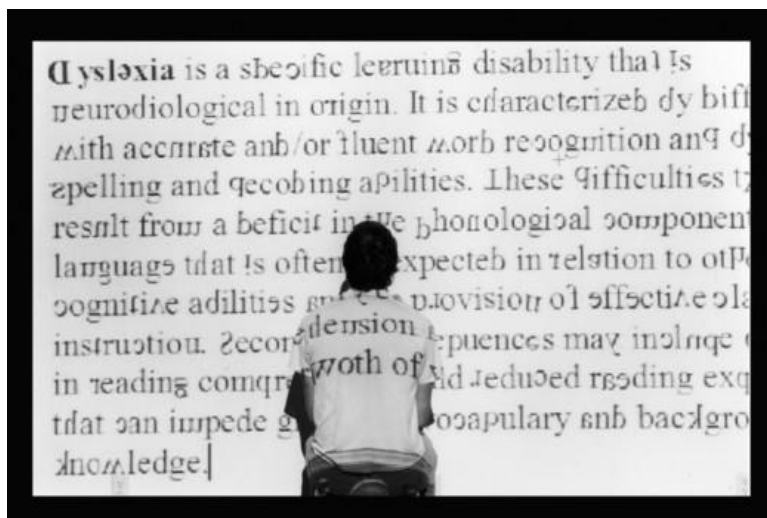
Henry Ford

Charles Schwab

Steven Spielberg

Walt Disney

*Henry Winkler, also known as the Fonz from the TV series Happy Days, is dyslexic. He never knew until he was an adult and his own son struggled with it and was diagnosed. He had a very strict military father and went to military school and really struggled. He had a talent for acting so that's how he became a success. Anyway, he got together a few years ago with an author and they wrote a series of books about a kid in elementary school with dyslexia (based on Winkler's life). They are called the Han Zipzer series. Many teachers haven't heard of them, but they're an excellent read. They are funny but bring to light some of the struggles that kids with dyslexia have as well as some of the stereotypes of being lazy or just a bad kid.



One gay, Jo n an p Bop w n froa w a k. "W hat two ou l i k
 t o a op op y?, Boq ske John. "I do n't k ow, J on h r ed ed,
 hat two lpyo l i e ot go?" It in I mi ten o yw at c g a
 w u u h k gh j hin
 o i nTV, e s d c l y e i a l f i w e c av es me do ron. "Wow,"
 m v eo an h o dc
 saip Jonh, "Po c n! hat g eati Let's e k e
 or W a r pea! ch c t h
 uq r t e c qoa d o s e fim y m the gh s o he stalt im e wetn
 s in hodb g." "Look," hey e ep, "af l n pit's r il e
 ll lpoxa O v l
 e yf a r o te!" "Gr eat!" Bopsho u eq, "Le t'sc k t
 R pgenqocker! M v i t o
 udi i r wa c o ngs e woh ti truns
 nt hem c o vea e tou."

Trying to read this passage, you will experience the kind of difficulty a dyslexic reader faces when deciphering normal typeface (Almeida).

from p. 98, in: Capossela, T.L. (1998). The Harcourt Brace Guide to Peer Tutoring. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace & Company.

ARTHUR AND PERCEPTUALS:

The current psychometric data suggests a very superior range of intelligence. Core scores of the WISC. Arthur had the greatest contribution and immediate auditory rote memory strengths were concentrated in the non-verbal tasks in the analysis and formation of abstract objects and time sequences; Arthur reached the 99th percentile score. That the results of the verbal clinical evaluation of Arthur's potential in the same areas to reflect, in part, his irregular anxiety, and some perceptual immaturities. Association ~~comprehension~~ and audit were noted, and these weaknesses were also to his difficulty sustaining his attention, and the auditory perceptual acuity, the extent of the degree of anxiety present and the limited skills acquired in the regular classroom set-perceptual development was also noted and the rote film order control; Arthur has trouble cognitive focus, suggesting some confusion and a

*We all see thing the same way.
 We see words in groups or phrases.
 The print is more dominant than the background. The print shows no movement. The printed letters are evenly black. Black print on white paper gives the best contrast for everyone. White background looks white.*

*We all see thing the same way.
 We see words in groups or phrases.
 The print is more dominant than the*