

Embrace a Different Kind of Mind



DRAMATIC
DYNAMIC
RESILIENT
INTELLIGENT
ENTREPRENEURIAL
EXCEPTIONAL
INVENTIVE
CREATIVE

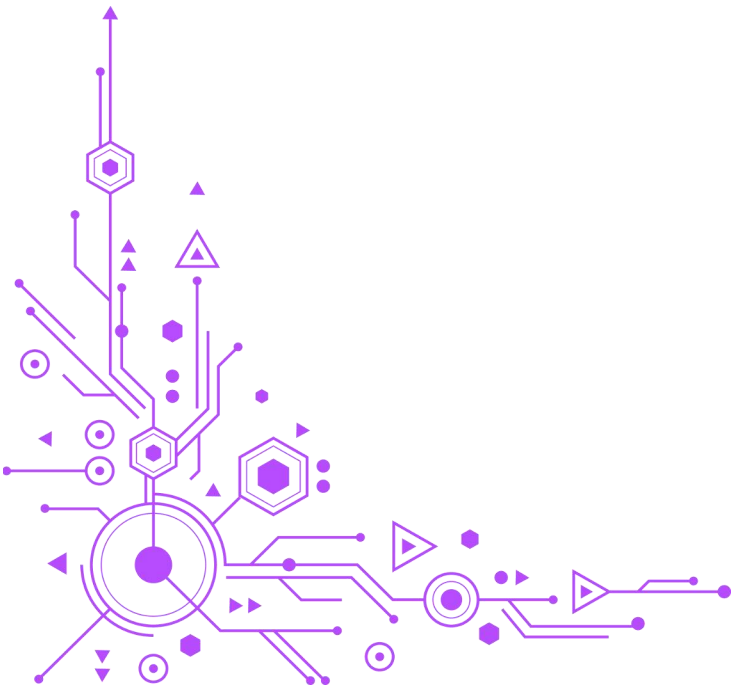
Deborah Heves



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EMBRACE DYSLEXIA



Embrace Dyslexia Commitment

Embrace Dyslexia intends to raise awareness of dyslexia in the Singaporean community with an aim to have as many people understand both the strengths and challenges that individuals with dyslexia face everyday.



Raise awareness for Embrace Dyslexia by:

- Sharing information about dyslexia in your workplace
- Inviting DAS to conduct Awareness Talks
- Including information about dyslexia in the staff handbook



Explore opportunities to work with DAS

- Workplace Giving or Volunteering Initiatives
- Mentoring DAS Alumni for internships or work experience



Champion dyslexic individuals

- Recognising their strengths and understand their weaknesses
- Providing appropriate support and encouragement



Donate to DAS Programmes

- Support low-income families by giving to the Bursary Fund



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The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) is a vibrant organisation serving the specialised educational needs of over 2,900 students with learning differences. DAS has over 240 professional staff offering a wide array of services and operates 13 learning centres across Singapore.

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Developing Success: To Succeed You Must First Fail

Dr Neil Alexander-Passe

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We are programmed from an early age to avoid failure and that any failure should be kept secret, as it is shameful. We see 'failure' as an emotionally charged word and one that we are taught will make us feel sad and deficient (it's a taboo subject in the Middle East, and leads some in Japan to commit suicide).

This faulty model sees success and failure as two opposite ends of a long path, with us being in the middle looking to choose either turning left or right. If we choose the wrong direction, we will end in failure, but if we choose carefully we will walk down the path to success. Failure is seen as something to avoid at all costs, rather than part of the journey towards success. New theories suggest to get to success you first need to walk through failure and learn from it, embrace it, to then reach success. When you have failed enough times, you are closer to success. Some have even said 'failure is life's biggest teacher'!

Very few stories of failure are told in the media, but success is commonly celebrated. One could argue that failure should be celebrated too, as it moves people closer to success.

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Thomas Edison, the inventor of the light bulb, which reportedly took 1,000 attempts to get it right before he came up with a successful prototype. When asked 'how does it feel to fail 1,000 time?' by a reporter, he replied 'I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps'.

It is once said that an executive at IBM once made a mistake that cost the company 5 million dollars, he went into see the CEO expected to be fired. However, when asked why he wasn't being fired, the CEO responded 'you have just gone through a 5 million-dollar training program, learn from it'. It's all about perspective.

Interestingly, there are business groups that meets around the world that specialises in entrepreneurship ventures that have failed and how to learn from them (www.thefailcon.com). Their website notes their 'conferences are for start-up founders to learn from and prepare for failure, for fast growth'. Their by-line is 'Embrace Your Mistakes. Build Your Success. Stop being afraid of failure and start embracing it'. This healthy attitude to success epitomises this book.

It could be argued that as we are programmed to avoid failure, we are so focused on this that we do not allow ourselves to see all possibilities, so maybe we do not allow ourselves to succeed, as that is not our aim? It is said if you try really hard to not be like your parents, you probably will end up just like them, as you will make many of the same safe choices.

It is said that young children are far more creative than adults, but have we asked why? Where does all this creative skill go, when we start school? One could argue that as soon as we learn the term 'failure', and try to avoid it at all costs, we make safer choices in life, and avoid risk, and repeat the same safe choices over and over again. Creativity relies upon the ability to take risks and fail, to try different combinations.

UNDERSTANDING SUCCESS

It is important to look at developing success in the non-dyslexic world, to understand if successful dyslexics are any different to successful non-dyslexics. This would also answer the question 'can dyslexics bring unique skills to the job market?'

A good place to start is the research by Professor Angela Lee Duckworth (2016), who researched why some adults are successful and others not. She argues that the skills for career and post-school success 'infrequently' correlate with school-success, as there are many in school who are very bright, but their less academic peer's out-do them in career stakes. She argues that these brighter students lack 'grit', defined as the completion of challenging goals in the face of setbacks and obstacles. They

have always done well at school and find it really hard to lose or fail, are inexperienced in coping with failure, and aim to avoid failure at all costs (in the workplace). As adults, they take safe choices and their path to success is much slower, being a safer version of who they really want to be.

Duckworth argues that learning to cope with failure is a key to success. Wimbledon High School, a private school in South London has a 'failure week' each year to help its high-achieving students become less fearful of making mistakes. A model that other schools could follow.

Duckworth believes that **'GRIT'** also stands for:

- ◆ **G**ut – trusting your gut, listening to it and follow it as it's made up of a multitude of life experiences.
- ◆ **R**esilience – the ability to bounce back from failure to succeed in tasks
- ◆ **I**ntentiveness (invent and reinvent) – the ability to reinvent oneself to the changing world, and to be creative to find new solutions to problems.
- ◆ **T**enacity – the ability to persevere, to not give up even if tasks are hard or seemingly impossible.

A second researcher, Professor Carol Dweck (2012), popularised the term 'growth mind-set' as a means to understand the need to challenge the 'I can't do this' and change it to 'I can do this', to develop resilience and persistence in adults, so they can handle failure or the fear of failure. It is the fear of failure that makes people believe they 'can't do a task', and the lack of persistence means they will give up more easily in tasks perceived to be hard.

Lastly, Professor Martin Seligman (1991, 2006) argues that learning and personal growth comes from being 'optimistic' about life, to see possible creative or divergent possibilities in business, and when developing new ideas. To take risks in life and then new possibilities can open up to you. He suggests the language parents, and teachers use is important to develop divergent thinking and solutions, and to develop resilience one needs to teach that any setbacks are specific to a task

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rather than being global, e.g. changing 'I'm no good at maths', to 'I find algebra hard'. If one can pin-point areas to develop, it is much easier to work on them, rather than feeling helpless about such a big barrier.

Professors Duckworth, Dweck and Seligman all agree that trying to avoid failure, can actually lead to failure, as only by embracing and learning from failure can real growth, and new opportunities occur.

Another key seems to be 'self-control', as the ability to stay focussed on tasks for the long-term rather than gaining immediate pleasure. This is demonstrated in the marshmallow test (Mischel, 2015). If a young child can resist eating a marshmallow in front of them for 5 minutes, they will be rewarded with three marshmallows, however, many lack the self-control and will eat the prize immediately. It is argued that those with a low self-control will lack the determination to aim for the long-term riskier goals of entrepreneurship success and will choose to stay in secure but low paying jobs.

Having 'Grit and Self-control' is argued by Duckworth to be like living life as a 'marathon rather than a sprint'. Playing the long-game will bring the ultimate success one seeks, but will require sustained effort over a long time (stamina), working long into the nights for many years 'grit' (hard-work). She argues that in most cases 'grit' not 'intelligence or academic achievement' is a better predictor of career success. Research suggests that most entrepreneurial ventures (70%) fail and that the road to success is often long and lonely, with brutal hours, massive amounts of stress, and a huge amount of personal sacrifice. However, using Dweck's 'growth-mindset', such individuals understand that any failure is temporary and that in the long-term, there will be success, thus resilience and perseverance/persistence pays off.

PROMOTING 'GRIT' IN CHILDREN

Duckworth suggests that to promote the development of 'grit' in children, parents should:

Put a challenge in front of them – by understanding that real growth and learning comes from overcoming barriers and difficult challenges; parents should give their children multiple challenges or problems to overcome, and to support them in overcoming them.

Promoting perseverance – support your child to understand that it's a myth that some people naturally get things, and others do not. Support them not to give up in achieving their goals (e.g. learning to play an instrument), as even those who are naturally gifted must work hard and long, persevering to attain their goals (e.g.

learning a new piece of music).

Nudge your children – let your children know you are going to be pushing them to achieve in life, this tells them you are supportive and will help them plan their time and to remind them when they need to practice.

Support their frustration – let your child know that you understand its frustrating gaining new skills or fine tuning a current skill. But also letting them know that they need to persevere, and you won't do it for them. This means they will gain a sense of achievement when they have accomplished hard tasks.

Let them fail – it's a hard thing to do, but children need to bounce back from failure and to gain their own mastery. Resilience comes from brushing themselves off and trying again. Trying again and again is hard but only through this process will they learn the true meaning of 'grit'. Parents need to let their children fail and then for them to reflect upon the experience, to then 'bounce' back and try again.

TALENT OR HARD WORK?

Professor Duckworth suggests that hard work trumps talent, and achieving requires 80% hard-work and 20% talent. Duckworth's research suggests that the ability to work hard over a long-period of time can bring attainment of degrees, the ability to take the rough and the smooth at West Point military academy, and entrepreneurship success. As in each case 'playing the long game' brought success.

SO WHY ARE MANY DYSLEXICS SUCCESSFUL?

It could be argued that dyslexics have learnt very early at school that 'it's okay to fail', and that whilst they hate failing and looking stupid or foolish in front of their peers, they learnt a very important life lesson. They understood that mastery takes time, and they must play the 'long-game', maybe not by choice.

At school, they developed 'self-control' by not joining in with the low intelligent and delinquent groups, as they morally believed that you go to school to learn, and that you need to work hard to achieve in life, this could be classed as 'grit'. They also recognised they worked much harder than their peers to gain similar results, and whilst this was unfair, they had no choice on the matter.

If 'grit' is not learnt as a child, the ability to be resilient and to bounce back from continued failure, then it is a much harder lesson to learn as an adult. This is why mental health is on the rise and is predicted to be this decade's number-one health concern, as to get things wrong is understood negatively, and we are programmed

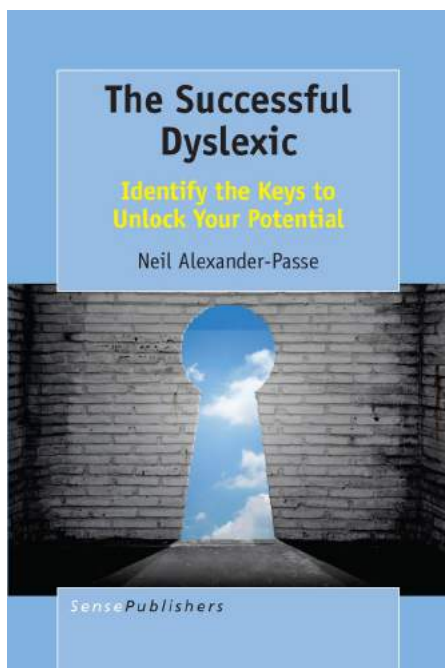
to get sad if we fail at things, e.g. school, dating, degree, work, marriage, etc.

This book argues that dyslexics worked harder than their peers at school, and carried on working harder as adults, however, as adults they were less restricted by their difficulties and were able to shine.

Returning to Duckworth's definition of 'Grit', dyslexics:

- ♦ Gut – listen to their gut and use it to guide them through life.
- ♦ Resilience – demonstrate the ability to bounce back from multiple failures starting from school and into adulthood.
- ♦ Inventiveness (invent and reinvent) – are divergent thinkers as they say 'it's normal to fail at things', and they tend to not be confined by traditional solutions to problems.
- ♦ Tenacity – at school understand the need to play the 'long-game' and that to learn and achieve they need to put in long-hours and stay focussed on tasks even when others tell them they should give up.

This does not discount the many thousands of successful non-dyslexics, however if they didn't learn to fail at school, did they learn it the hard way as adults?



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR NEIL ALEXANDER-PASSE



Neil Alexander-Passe is dyslexic himself, has just completed a 'PhD by Published Work' at the University of Sunderland, and since September 2017 has been the Head of Additional Educational Needs (managing a large team supporting students with SEND, English as an additional language, more able, and disadvantaged) at a large mainstream secondary school in North London.

In 1990 he gained a BA Hons in Graphic Design (University of South Wales) leading to a 20 year successful career as a graphic designer in the travel industry. In 2005 gained an MPhil researching how dyslexic teenagers cope using measures of self-esteem, coping and depression (The Open University), and a spell as a postgraduate researcher (London South Bank University). In 2010 he published his first book 'Dyslexia and Depression: The Hidden Sorrow'.

His passion is to understand the trauma that many dyslexics experience at school, and any emotional ramifications that follow impacting on mental health. In 2010 he retrained as a teacher and has worked in special needs in both primary and secondary education. He is an advocate of early assessment in schools (gaining his CPT3A in 2014), and this has led him to present to MPs and peers in parliament on educational policy.

His current focus is with a 'bi-ability' theoretical model for dyslexia (compared to the 'social' model of disability) and the use of a 'post-traumatic growth' concept to understand how many dyslexic individuals can be successful 'despite or because' they experienced traumatic schooling as children.

His academic books include two edited volumes investigating 'Dyslexia and Creativity' (2010) and 'Dyslexia and Mental Health' (2012) and a book investigating 'Dyslexia, Dating, Marriage and Parenthood' (2012).

Ten peer-review papers have been published to date and his 2015 book 'Dyslexia and Mental Health: Helping people identify destructive behaviours and find positive ways to cope' was widely acclaimed with reviews by Professors Angela Fawcett, Maggie Snowling, and Neil Humphrey.

His 10th book entitled 'The Successful Dyslexic-Identify the keys to unlock your potential' has been published in 2017 with acclaimed reviews from Professors Angela Fawcett and Steve Chin, along with Gavin Reid and Thomas West.

In September 2017 he changed from being Head of SEND at a primary school to a large secondary school, so can reflect on the needs of a broad range of student needs.



David Fawcett: A Successful Dyslexic!

David Fawcett

It's not easy being expected to write about being a successful dyslexic. My working life wasn't a total disaster, despite all sorts of difficulties, I did enjoy a degree of success.

My dyslexia was not diagnosed until I was around 50 years old and I retired at 58. So throughout school, college and most of my working life I was not seen as being dyslexic or having any kind of learning difficulty but, I was:

- ◆ Just a bit slow
- ◆ Somewhat disorganised
- ◆ Perhaps a little anxious

I was actually diagnosed by Angela's colleague Rod Nicolson, who provided me with one of his extremely comprehensive reports, and he took the trouble to point out that in parts of the IQ test I was in the superior range.

Wow! I would love to have known this years ago.

At school, some dyslexic children become angry, or even aggressive, because they know they are not being treated properly and not having their needs met. Now I wasn't angry, because I felt it was my fault that I couldn't do stuff and got things wrong, so that made me sad, yes, I was sad rather than angry. I always seemed to be lost, I didn't know where I was supposed to be, so that also made me anxious. Everyone else seemed just to know the correct room and the right time to be there. So, I soon learned to latch on to others who were smarter than 'slow old

"At school, some dyslexic children become angry, or even aggressive, because they know they are not being treated properly and not having their needs met."

me', the rather miserable six or seven-year old. To me now looking back, I do see dyslexia as a miserable condition and I want people, especially teachers to understand this. It's the wanting to please, the striving to do well, followed by constant failure in almost everything that the school demands. If there are no successes to build on, the result is misery. I can't start writing about this today without first making this point, it's a miserable condition that can be made even worse by teachers or carers who just don't understand it.

There is no cure for dyslexia. I'm just as dyslexic as when I was at school.

But I have learned coping strategies that enable me to function 'normally' AND even be successful in a very demanding job.

Some 'experts' say dyslexia is just a reading problem, others say it is much more than that and I would agree with them. It is a travesty that teachers and even some educational psychologists insist on bombarding dyslexic children and adults with more rote learning! Rod calls it creating a 'mental abscess', where you simply can't face failing yet again. Do we want these unfortunate children to feel miserable and frustrated? I can't believe we do, so why persist in this type of remedial action? Wouldn't it be better to play word games, perhaps look at the derivation of the word, at similar words and their meanings and spelling? Provide number squares so the child has instant access to what six sevens are. Some good teachers and specialists already do this.

I believe that dyslexic people need help with the environment in which they find themselves and with what is expected of them. They are keen to please and to learn but they need it explicitly spelling out, if just left in the dark they will fail. I'm sure that teachers aren't hoping for kids to fail just to watch them squirm, but I can assure you that is how it feels! Yes, what I'm saying is give them the methods and the point of the lesson at the start. These are often smart kids who will then romp through the lesson gaining the knowledge they are supposed to learn.

Ideally a child will have a champion, someone who believes in them. Often a parent will fill this role because they believe in their child. But a more powerful champion might be the teacher who can "see" some hidden talent in there and instill the confidence to bring it out. Most successful dyslexics can instance a time when someone they respected said:-

"Well done, that was excellent, I knew you could it"

"Some 'experts' say dyslexia is just a reading problem, others say it is much more than that and I would agree with them."

A word of warning here! This only works when the child has actually done something outstanding, false praise is patronizing, and worse than useless to a smart dyslexic person!

Or they might say - "Some people are high flyers, they will really succeed in life and in my opinion you are a high flyer"

How often do we see great talent or even genius and not point it out?

The main problem is lack of confidence caused by constant failure.

So, strategies are the key and this is where good teachers can really help. Rather than keep presenting the same rote learning, kids need to be interested and stimulated if they are to learn. In just the same way as we would present to adults.

I was miserable at school I was happy at home and during the holidays, my parents were great, extremely supportive, they seemed to understand my problems and they helped me a lot during the primary school years. They believed in me and spent hours trying to help me master the times tables and simple spellings that the school demanded... but I still struggle decades later...

Despite all their help I failed my 11 plus exam, in those days (and it must have been at the start of the 20th century) you either passed to go to a grammar school leading to a successful career or you failed and went to a secondary modern leading to some sort of poorly paid manual or vocational job if you were lucky.

As I say, my parents were brilliant, they weren't wealthy but they found the money to send me to a private school, from 12 to 13. And it was at this point that I began to succeed and even enjoy some aspects of school. Firstly, the lunches were actually edible, the classes were smaller and the teachers were, well, inspirational. After two years, I sat the entrance examination for the Central Technical School, it was quite a prestigious state school and an important one at that time as Sheffield was a major industrial manufacturing and steel producing city. Only one in twenty of the thirteen-year old boys who took the exam gained entry - and I passed!

Whilst private school had prepared me well to get through the entrance exam, it hadn't prepared me for the rigors of this traditional school. We could gain merit points for good work or behaviour. It was also possible to get demerits for poor work or bad behaviour and I'm afraid, to my horror, I contributed more demerits because I was sometimes late and I didn't always get top marks on homework and tests - even though I tried my hardest. But demerits weren't the worst thing, we were also caned for lateness and for things like getting less than 18 out of 20 in a French

vocabulary test, which I frequently did. There were other degradations for struggling students like me, imagine being told, "Fawcett - stand in the waste bin, you're rubbish," and this happened to me several times. Or "Wait until you get those shovels in your hands". This puzzled me but as my classmate Johnson explained "He thinks we are only fit for manual work and we won't get a decent job".

I did struggle through the three-year engineering course but I could succeed in most of the subjects, we did thirteen in all, academic as well as technical. You had to pass in all subjects to gain the diploma. I got a second-class diploma, equivalent to five O levels, which was enough to get me into further education technical college age just sixteen without having to do a foundation course.

But still a poor start in life with no chance of university and little chance of a successful or rewarding job. But I was happy to leave school at 16 and find work, I have to say it was easier in 1961 when jobs were plentiful.

The technical school was an excellent source of apprentices with a good grounding in technical subjects as well as the normal school subjects. Local steel works would request batches of boys each summer. Mr Westnidge was our careers master, he interviewed me towards the end of my last term at school, he explained he needed to learn my personal preferences to help me find a suitable job. Because I didn't want to be an Engineering Apprentice, and I certainly didn't see myself in a blue boiler suit, I explained that I preferred interacting with people rather than machines, I liked art and music. "Perfect! boy" he said, "engineering apprentice", adding me to his list of 25.

I didn't take that job but I did join the steel works. My Dad was a development engineer, and he got me an interview for a job in one of the labs. Wow, a job in a laboratory, wearing a white smock rather like a doctor, this was the job for me. I was very eager to please at the interview and got the job.

You can imagine my disappointment on my first day when I was issued with a brown smock to wear and then at the end of the first day being given a brush and told to sweep the floor. It wasn't only humility I learned in those early years.

I was given one day per week 'day release' to go to technical college and asked to attend two nights at night school. I learned Instrument Maintenance to advanced level, it was only vocational and it is the highest qualification I ever got.

"I began to realise that anything was possible with a combination of hard work and family, friends and colleagues who believe in you. This is the secret of my success!"

I did a silly thing at that time, I did a number of silly things which I won't go into now, but this was relevant to my dyslexia because my handwriting was so bad. It was just about legible, I could just about keep up when copying from the board at night school but it looked so untidy like that of a five-year old - I was embarrassed by it. So, I bought my first Self Improvement book "Teach Yourself Handwriting". I was so excited by it and set to work practicing and forming beautiful letters. It took forever to produce just one word because it was teaching me to do copper plate calligraphy and not neat writing which was my goal. But I had lived a life of trying to do the impossible with futile attempts at learning tables, spellings and maths, so I kept at it. I had gained some resilience despite my failures mainly through encouragement from my parents and those I respected. Why was the handwriting exercise silly?

I found after hours of intensive practice on each letter of the alphabet, and getting some beautiful letter forms that I could be proud of, I had done something awful to my writing hand! I had lost the fluency with which I produced my untidy writing and I was never going to be fast in calligraphy, so this is a cautionary tale for anyone tempted to give advice to a student with poor writing!

I finished up with a sort of untidy calligraphy making me use two strokes to form every "e" and there are lots of e's! But I can do beautiful writing for a birthday card given that there are 10 or 15 minutes to spare.

After 4 years maintaining automatic process control instrumentation, I was particularly impressed with the Honeywell ones. I could see the advance in electronics in the world and wanted to learn more so I went to Sheffield University. Not to do a degree, remember I had very limited qualifications, I joined the university as a technician in the electronics workshop. Here I did get to wear a white coat! I didn't learn how to design circuits, beyond the very rudimentary ones but I did learn the terminology and what they did. Now this was not a very well paid job and by this time I had just got married to this rather special woman, she was earning a lot more than me but I didn't know what else I might do. Then there was a job advertised by Honeywell, the organisation I so much admired when I worked in the steel works. They wanted an Inside Sales Engineer - selling just the sort of control systems I was familiar with. But I couldn't possibly apply, they wouldn't want me, they were a major global organisation and I was so poor at writing, spelling and had very little confidence in myself, especially in a selling role. It was here that Angela stepped in, "you can do it, they'll really like you, you must apply". So, I sent for the application form and completed it in my copper plate writing, with Angela working as my spellcheck. This had to impress them and it did because they granted me an interview. I wasn't going to fool them at the interview, I wasn't very

good at anything, why would they want to employ me? Angela said just be yourself and they'll love you, I really did want that job.

Well I did get it and I needn't have worried, they had a great training program and I had an amazing mentor, who like Angela could see a lot more potential in me than I could see. He sent me off on a 6-week training course saying anyone from Sheffield has to come out top of the class. He advised me to revise each day's work during the evenings to be ready for a test at the beginning of each day. I did the revision and for the first time in my life came out top of the whole bunch. The person most impressed was me! I began to realise that anything was possible with a combination of hard work and family, friends and colleagues who believe in you. This is the secret of my success.

I had an amazing career at Honeywell, my inside selling job entailed answering the phone. Each phone call presented a different challenge and I enjoyed it until there was a recession and I had the option of redundancy or to move. Neither option appealed to me so I was lucky that one of the managers of the domestic controls side of the business saw some sales potential in me and offered me an outside sales post. Now this meant I was given a new car, well we couldn't afford a car at the time so this was quite an incentive. But it had been my technical expertise that saw me through the job so far. I was now to be selling much simpler devices like thermostats to heating merchants, plumbers and local authorities. This demanded totally new skills, not just sales and interpersonal skills but navigation and timekeeping, both of which are difficult for dyslexic people. I developed route charts for each customer as it was no good relying on my memory and tried hard to keep appointments to the minute as customers set aside a time to see you and it's rude to be early or late. You know it's 14 years since I retired from work and I still have nightmares where I'm late and, try as I might, I can't find my way into the building for an important meeting.

Here my success started to take off and I was promoted to regional sales manager with 6 sales engineers reporting to me. I enjoyed that side of things and interestingly, found out later that many dyslexics succeed in management and in sales, I did both but didn't find it easy. You see all this time I still had no diagnosis of dyslexia, so as well as finding strategies to help me do the job, I was still in the business of covering my tracks, I'd start early in the morning and plan my day, I would know where I needed to be, who I needed to see and at what time for 6 or 7 appointments in a day. They were written down in my diary, there was no way I could remember the names so I would quickly check as I walked confidently into reception.

I needed to work late to ensure my reports were in on time - they do take a lot

longer when you are dyslexic! I found a dictaphone invaluable and later used my mobile phone to record the results of my sales calls. I covered most of the north of England so there was plenty of time in the car to put my thoughts down whilst they were fresh and this made report writing easier.

I found note taking invaluable during telephone calls, I had to call the guy to make the appointment and when I did I wrote down what he said, things he wanted to discuss and any personal information he gave me. So, when I got to see him I was able to refer to my notes and ask how his children were or congratulate him on his promotion etc.

I even asked if they minded if I made notes during the visit so I had a record of any actions I promised to make and I was able to write down any feedback or competitive information he volunteered.

I also made notes at meetings, it meant I had a brief record of decisions reached as a useful reminder for me at the next meeting. Just brief notes not only compensated for my memory problems but would give me an advantage over my colleagues who were not dyslexic.

I became pretty successful and enjoyed my interactions with these many relatively small customers. Now we also had larger customers, major accounts, that were handled by older, more experienced sales engineers than me. There were just a handful of major accounts and each was worth around £10m, more than my whole region would make in a year.

I could not believe it when I was asked to take over the Ideal Standard account, it was the biggest account we had in Europe. I challenged my boss and mentor, Derek, about this as I was only in my mid 20s and these accounts were normally handled by really high flyers, I said. Well you are a high flyer said Derek, and this was one of the most amazing things anyone has ever said to me. I was so pleased I didn't even mind that I didn't get a pay-rise for taking on all that extra responsibility!

I held that account for 20 years, and that's £200m over the time that could have easily been lost to competition. It was so important that my name was considered for sales awards, we had something called the Presidents Club, Honeywell was an American company having a president as CEO. Each year a few salesmen would be selected from across the world and just to be nominated was a great honour. My third nomination was successful, I was invited to join the presidents club. This was a lifelong change in status, it was even printed on my business card. To receive the award Angela and I were whisked off to Puerto Rico for a two weeks all-expenses-paid " business meeting " and we actually had breakfast with the President. I

continued to be successful and was even nominated again for Presidents Club - this didn't happen very often and it was unlikely that I would be even considered again. Well I got it for a second time, I was what the Americans called a two- timer! And we got to go to Puerto Rico for a second time.

That was not the pinnacle of my career. After 20 years handling the Stelrad account I had to pass it on to a younger salesman. On my last visit the CEO organised a leaving presentation for me. They brought together around 20 of my contacts from across the company to wish me a farewell and give me a leaving present. It was a pocket electronic organiser, - it seems I hadn't totally hidden my organisational difficulties from them - but meeting that group at a unique sort of leaving party was one of the best things that have ever happened to me.

One of our other major accounts had decided to go to competition, it was going to be a disaster for our bottom line. To cut a long story short, I managed to turn their decision around and hold the business for many years. My secret was to build trust, to make sure that we always followed through on our promises and to ensure that quality and delivery promises were kept. This wasn't easy because my company was not perfect and it needed a great deal of input from me to make sure we met the customer's expectations. I asked for an office at the customer with a desk, filing cabinet and phone and within two years we had not just kept the business but Honeywell was granted the Baxi supplier of the year award.

As I say I retired 14 years ago, now for the first time in my life I don't have that awful feeling each night and morning, knowing I had to face school and later work, you know that feeling when you have an exam or interview that you are not totally prepared for. I am fully enjoying my life now supporting Angela and I'm extremely proud of the work that she does and my part in supporting that work. In fact, most recently in India, Angela was ill and I stood in for her, giving her talk on Theories of dyslexia to over 250 people, and I have now started to be invited to give talks myself. I'd like also to thank Angela for the support that she has given me over the years and for being one of those people who believed in me and who played such a big part in all of the successes I achieved in life.

So, my take home message is that you can succeed with dyslexia, even without support, but you need people who believe in you to give you the confidence to keep trying!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



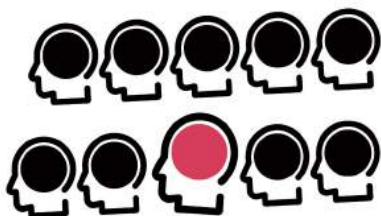
DAVID FAWCETT

David struggled with literacy in primary school, but with support from his parents gained a place at technical college. Despite all his efforts, he was the boy who scored 'only fair' for his academic work. On leaving school his careers master dispatched him to the steelworks, although he really wanted to work with people. Building on his hard-earned technical skills, David became a technician at the University of Sheffield. With the encouragement of his wife Angela, he was appointed to a technical sales position at Honeywell controls. Combining his technical and people skills to excellent effect, he rose to Regional sales manager, and received many awards for his work. The stress of coping in this demanding environment as a recently diagnosed dyslexic led him to seek early retirement at the age of 58. Acting as carer for Angela's mother in her final years proved to be the most demanding job he had ever faced! Retirement gave him the opportunity to develop his skills as an artist to good effect, as well as travelling internationally to conferences on dyslexia. In 2012 David presented his first talk on his dyslexia journey, and he has since contributed at international conferences in the UK, New Zealand, Asia and Brussels. His personal insights into the strengths and challenges of dyslexia have been very well received internationally.



EMBRACE DYSLEXIA

One in 10 people will have some form of learning difference.



Dyslexics use the **right brain** more than the left when learning.

Many dyslexics can see **unique solutions** to problems.



Around **40%** of people with dyslexia also have **ADHD**.



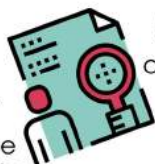
Dyslexia **runs in families**. Children have **50% chance** of having dyslexia if one parent has it.



They can see things from **different angles** and have **strong visualisation skills**.



Research has found that around **35%** of **entrepreneurs** in the United States are dyslexic.



Many dyslexics are talented and creative and they can be **"big picture"** thinkers.



Dyslexics do not "see" words in reverse. The **"b" & "d"** letter reversal occurs when they are unable to name the letter.

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Vickar Adam - Photographic Genius

Angela Fawcett

Research Consultant

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

I recently met Vickar Adam at a conference in Bandung for the Dyslexia Association of Indonesia. Vickar had been invited to inspire the audience with his talent and brilliance as a photographer.

An elegant, charismatic but vulnerable man, Vickar has only been diagnosed as dyslexic in the last 2 years, and he is still struggling to understand the concept fully. He has always been aware that he was different from many of his peers and struggled to achieve his degree in Economics, taking 4.5 years rather the expected 3 years to complete.

In his younger days, art, in particular painting was Vickar's salvation, but since becoming a self-supporting adult, he has realised that paintings take too long to complete to be a viable source of funds for life. Instead, he has developed a new passion for photography, setting up his own company, Vickar Adam Photography, in 2010.

He has already been extraordinarily successful, working first in Rotterdam, and more recently at the Paris fashion show and has been asked to take photos to advertise Rolex watches. His ambition is now to move to Europe, where he can express his interests more freely, choosing Amsterdam, and learning Dutch because its similarity to Bahasa makes it more feasible to achieve for a dyslexic adult. I was extremely impressed with Vickar and how well he has dealt with his dyslexia, despite receiving little support throughout school and beyond. I shall allow his studies to speak for themselves, and thank Vickar for the opportunity to share some of these memorable images with you.

"An elegant, charismatic but vulnerable man, Vickar has only been diagnosed as dyslexic in the last 2 years, and he is still struggling to understand the concept fully."



Photos have been published with permission from Vickar Adam.

This page:

Fashion photoshoot for international model wearing Indonesian clothing brand.

Next page:

Photos taken at the Rinaldi Yunardi Fashion show. Rinaldi Yunardi is a famous fashion designer from Indonesia who works with many Hollywood celebrities





Photos have been published with permission from Vickar Adam.

This page:

Makeup Photoshoot for Ivan Gunawan Indonesia campaign.

Make up: @ivan_gunawan

Hair by: @titidj.wig

Models: @devitaravani

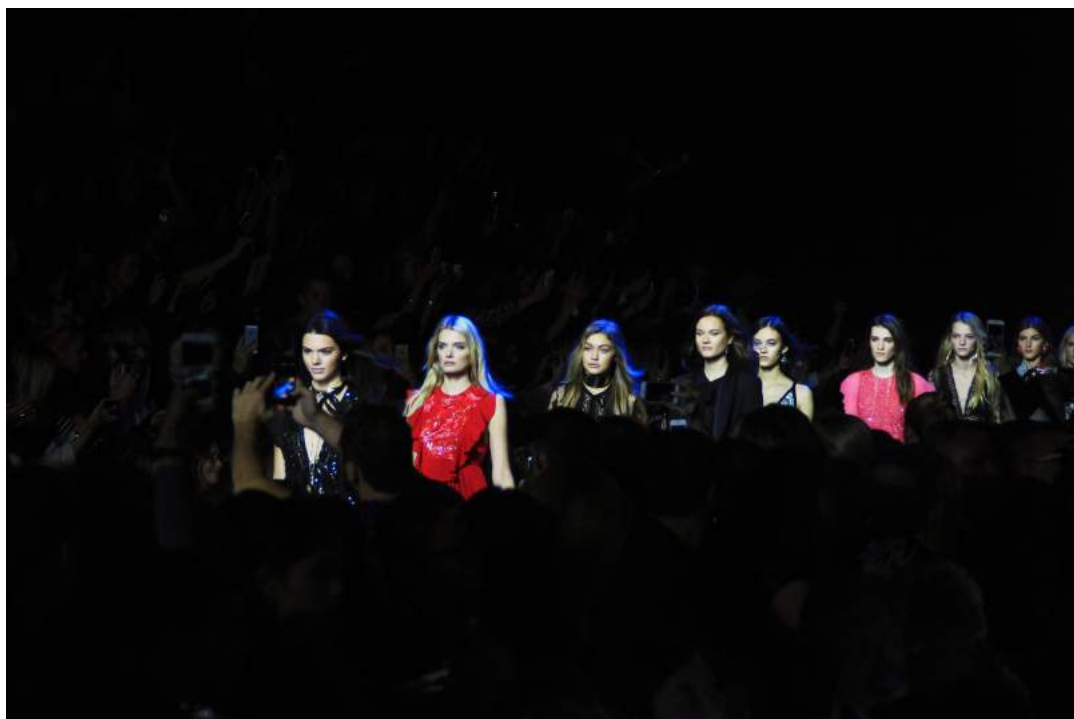
@nadjash

@elsabrilliant

Next page:

Photos taken at the Elie Saab Fashion Show at Paris Fashion Week 2016





memento

by WTIMES.ID

Di Balik
Kisah
Sukses
**5 Pendiri
Startup**

Sedang Populer,
**APA ITU DIET
KETOGENIK?**

TRANSFORMASI
**Generasi
Alpha**
TELAH DIMULAI

**JELAJAH
ROMANSA
KULINER DI
RESTORAN
KLASIK**

ANOTHER SIDE OF

**Richard
Muljadi**



Photos have been published with permission from Vickar Adam.

Facing page:

Cover photo for Memento Magazine, October 2017, Indonesia

This page:

Street fashion photo taken in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Published for Vickar's solo exhibition in January 2017.

And Vicar below in action taking this photo!





Photos have been published with permission from Vickar Adam.

This page:

Photo campaign for Rolex Pro Hunter
by Bruno Rubinski Paris

Model: @simon.adde

Fashion Director: @signorfandi

Below: Vickar Adam





ABOUT VICKAR ADAM

Vicar was born in West Sumatra but grew up in Banda Aceh - Nanggroe Aceh Darussalam, the small city in the very north of Sumatra, as his parent moved there for work. His parent did not know about dyslexia and nor did he, until around 2 years ago. He remembers that his life was not easy and he had to face it by himself. He used to help himself to solve his own problems and decided not to let anyone know what happened in school, where he got bullied and preferred spending his time alone with his drawing book. He started photography in 2010 after he finished his contract on his project with humanitarians in Nias after disaster recovery. He learned in Bali with the photography community and found that this is his passion. He has now travelled to several countries for work.

To view more of Vickars work see Instagram @vickar.adam



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



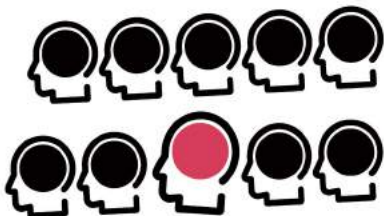
EMERITUS PROFESSOR ANGELA FAWCETT

Swansea University

Professor Angela Fawcett is a leading international researcher into dyslexia and other development disabilities, encompassing a range of theoretical and applied contributions to this field. Her approach is broad and interdisciplinary ranging from child and cognitive development to educational screening and intervention, as well as development cognitive neuroscience. She is the Vice President of the British Dyslexia Association and also the Former Chair and Director of the Centre for Child Research at the Swansea University, UK.

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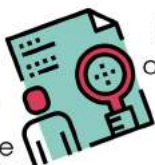
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Is Dyslexia a Desirable Difficulty?

Deborah Hewes

Head of Publicity and Publications

Dyslexia Association of Singapore

The concept of 'desirable difficulty' was first conceived and researched by two UCLA psychologists, Robert Bjork and Elizabeth Bjork. They describe a desirable difficulty as a learning task which requires more effort with conditions that make learning more challenging and therefore creates an environment for better learning which can 'trigger encoding and retrieval processes that support learning, comprehension and remembering.' (Bjork and Bjork, 2009). It is not so much of a stretch of the definition that the concept of 'desirable difficulties' is connected to dyslexia as Malcolm Gladwell (2014) does in his book "David and Goliath". Gladwell writes that dyslexia, 'forces you to develop skills that might otherwise have lain dormant'.

Gladwell (2014) proposes that a difficulty can work as an asset for an individual. Dyslexics must work harder, use individual signature strengths, and develop their own coping strategies to compensate for their learning challenges. In making his case for desirable difficulty in dyslexia, Gladwell presents three successful individuals with dyslexia; David Boies, Ingvar Kamprad and Gary Cohn. For these very successful individuals he identifies their 'signature' strengths as an asset in relation to their success. In the case of Boies, a world-famous trial lawyer, his success is due to his 'listening skills and formidable memory', Kamprad, the founder of Swedish furniture retailer IKEA, for his 'innovative thinking and disagreeableness' and in Cohn's case, a Wall Street banker and CEO of Goldman Sachs, his success was due to his 'capacity to deal with failure and his risk-taking ability'. Gladwell builds a case for a desirable disability where some people in the face of adversity strive harder, work smarter and use their strengths to succeed in the world. Gladwell goes on to question, is it their innate strengths that have ensured success

"Dyslexics must work harder, use individual signature strengths, and develop their own coping strategies to compensate for their learning challenges."

despite their disability or has the disability itself ensured that they have needed to harness those strengths more effectively?

Gladwell's case for desirable difficulties of dyslexia features two concepts, 'capitalisation learning' and 'compensation learning'. Capitalisation learning, as he terms it, is "easy", this is where we use our talents to help us to learn. If we have a talent, for example a good memory, then using this talent to help further our learning seems clear and logical. However, he states that compensatory learning is much more challenging, this is the type of learning that comes out of necessity, and he indicates those with a 'serious disability', which he implies dyslexia is, who can still learn in spite of their disability make for an excellent story, something worth talking about, something worth investigating and understanding. This is where Gladwell writes about the unique adaptation to the learning environment, learning things in their own special way, and finding the strategies needed to learn, that compensatory learning and capitalisation learning has been compared to a 'desirable difficulty'.

In the 'desirable differences' theory developed by Bjork and Bjork (2009), they identify a number of factors or challenges that can be introduced into learning that will support coding and retrieval of information, they describe the factors as 'desirable difficulties'. The concept is that if learning is too easy then deeper processing is not achieved and therefore, doesn't encourage long-term memory retention. They talk about how the learner needs to take an active process in the interpretation of information, therefore, making memory durable and flexible. Acts of 'traditional study', like reading and rereading information in the hope it will stick in memory is treating the brain and memory like a 'tape recorder' and this doesn't mean that when this information is needed, like in an exam, that all you have to do is try to rewind the tape and expect the facts to reveal themselves. Therefore, Bjork and Bjork claim that when learning and studying, doing things differently or in a challenging way will make a difference in retrieval of information when needed. Factors such as spacing out or massing study, interleaving topics and different types of study events can be introduced into learning to make learning challenging and difficult. They also state that individuals need to take an active role in managing their own learning activities and learning how to learn is the 'ultimate survival tool' (Bjork and Bjork, 2009, p. 63). Desirable difficulties are said to be desirable because they challenge learners to encode and then retrieve information better. However, they also state that if learners are not able to respond to challenges then these strategies are not desirable, if students are not equipped to succeed in these situations then this becomes an 'undesirable difficulty'.

So, can we say that having dyslexia is a 'desirable difficulty'? Ask any parent with a young child diagnosed with dyslexia about the concept of dyslexia being a

'desirable difficulty' and there may be a less positive response to this concept. Many parents would not think that dyslexia is something they would wish for their child when they see the hardships and failure they have in learning. The experience of many children with dyslexia shows the negative effects it has on their self-esteem and self-concept. (Burden, 2005; Humphrey and Mullins, 2002; Ingesson, 2007; Scott, 2004; McNulty, 2003). Many parents of dyslexic children would probably think that Gladwell glorifies the signature strengths of famous individuals with dyslexia and does not address or even consider the real struggles and failures that their children face in their educational journey. In fact, the concept of 'desirable difficulty' is only related to a select few adults in Gladwell's book, are these individuals the exception rather than the rule, (a concept to be explored later in this article, and even these adults when asked by Gladwell, "would they wish dyslexia on their own children? Every one of them said no" (Gladwell, 2014, p. 161). Even though these adults were successful, some declaring they were successful because of their dyslexia – all did not want their children to experience what they had gone through when they were at school. Boies said that watching his boys, who were diagnosed with dyslexia, read "nearly broke his heart" (Gladwell, 2014, p. 161).

So, what is it about dyslexia that presents this paradox of views? The positive and inspiring vision of dyslexic adults who have used their signature strengths and coping strategies to succeed in life, who have supposedly overcome their difficulty, compared to the struggle and failure that dyslexic children have in school when learning to read, write and spell. Looking at research we find such diverse views in our understanding of what dyslexia is and even when defining dyslexia consensus is still not achieved. Alexander-Passe (2015a) even suggests that dyslexia is going through an identity crisis, and that the term dyslexia is not universally used when talking about reading and learning difficulties. Much effort has gone into understanding what dyslexia is, its origins, and a number of theories have been established. Having a clear theoretical understanding of dyslexia allows for effective remediation strategies (Rose, 2009; Alexander-Passe, 2015a; Elliott and Grigorenko, 2014), and with the correct support for dyslexics the better their educational journey and life success will be. Reviewing what dyslexia is, what it means to have dyslexia and only then we can determine what is needed for dyslexia to be a desirable difficulty.

Most definitions of dyslexia agree that it is neurologically based, (Lyon, Shaywitz and Shaywitz, 2003) which means the brain is structured differently and functions differently for dyslexics. This has been confirmed in a number of studies using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) to show the difference in brain activity between dyslexic and non-dyslexic controls. (Shaywitz, 2003). Over the many years of research, a number of theories have been established as to the causal reasons behind dyslexia. The cognitive theories of dyslexia indicate a number of areas

within the brain that are affected; phonological deficit, (Hulme and Snowling, 2013); rapid naming and double deficit, (Wolf and Bowers, 1999); short-term and long-term working memory, (Nicolson and Fawcett, 2007); low-level sensory processing including auditory, visual and magnocellular processing (Livingstone et al., 1991); attentional factors, (Shaywitz, 2003); and psycho-motor function focusing on the cerebellum, (Nicolson and Fawcett, 2010). All theories have their supporters and detractors not everyone is in agreement. (Gori and Facoetti, 2014) nevertheless if, all theories were combined they create a powerful picture of dyslexia is and its impact on learning.

In Elliott and Grigorenko's (2014) controversial book, 'The Dyslexia Debate', these theories are reviewed, and the authors summarise that with all the research and studies that have occurred over so many years there is little agreement on the cause of dyslexia of indeed a definition. And apart from the phonological processing theory, which to date is one of the strongest causal theories behind dyslexia, (Snowling, 2003), there is little impact on the methods to be employed in the classroom to address learning disabilities. Numerous definitions of dyslexia have been created based on the many theories. Again, there is no clear consensus on defining dyslexia. The Dyslexia Association of Singapore (DAS) draws upon three significant reports in its definition of dyslexia, the Rose Report from the UK (Rose 2009) and two from USA (USDEA, 2006; NICHD, 2000). These reports are used within both countries to drive policy making decisions and to direct funding and support to individuals with learning difficulties. DAS defines dyslexia as follows:

Dyslexia is a type of specific learning difficulty identifiable as a developmental difficulty of language learning and cognition (USDEA, 2006). It is a learning difficulty that primarily affects the skills involved in accurate and fluent word reading and spelling. Characteristic features of dyslexia are difficulties in phonological awareness, verbal memory and processing speed. Co-occurring difficulties may be seen in aspects of language, motor co-ordination, mental calculation, concentration and personal organisation, but these are not, by themselves, markers of dyslexia (Rose, 2011). An appropriate literacy programme should include the following components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension (NICHD, 2000). The literacy programme provided by DAS meets these guidelines. The definition although not specifically mention that it is neurological in nature, defines the observable behaviours and highlights the challenges faced by those with dyslexia. It also includes the recommended literacy programme needed to support dyslexics in learning.

It is interesting, however, to look at definitions of dyslexia created by dyslexics themselves. Ben Foss (Foss, 2013), a dyslexic and the author of "The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan", has a unique definition of dyslexia which is something that

other dyslexics would probably endorse. This definition also enhances the idea of what is needed for dyslexia to be 'desirable difficulty'. Foss's definition of dyslexia is as follows:

"Dyslexia is a genetic, brain-based characteristic that results in difficulty connecting the sounds of spoken language to written words. It can result in errors in reading or spelling as well as in a number of areas not considered major life activities, such as determining right and left. Individuals who are dyslexic can be highly independent and intelligent. Dyslexia is also characterised by a set of strengths that typically come with this profile in one or more of the following areas: verbal, social narrative, spatial, kinaesthetic, visual, mathematical or musical skills. Overall it is characterised by an increased ability to perceive broad patterns and a reduced ability to perceive fine detail in systems." (Foss, 2013, p. 4)

This definition not only describes the challenges but also addresses the many strengths and positive features of dyslexia. Indeed, these strengths and weaknesses are reflected in the psycho-educational assessments completed by Educational Psychologists and specialists in the field in trying to diagnose specific learning difficulties including dyslexia. It is through the assessment and diagnosis of dyslexia that strengths and weaknesses are identified and recommendations for support and other accommodations are made. (Reid and Wearmouth, 2009).

Psycho-educational assessment is necessary for diagnosis of dyslexia and is a requirement by many governments and school boards for appropriate funding and provision of support for dyslexic students. (Rose, 2009; USDEA, 2006; Everatt, Weeks and Brooks, 2007). Identification and assessment of dyslexia empowers educators on how to support students with learning disabilities and what intervention strategies would be of benefit. Reid and Wearmouth (2009), see the assessment process as an opportunity to problem-solve and identify the characteristics of an individual learner and how they relate to the curriculum and learning environment. They also state that dyslexia should not only be identified through the use of tests alone. The whole picture of a learner is important by understanding the biological, environmental and cognitive factors involved in the individual's life. (Frith, 1999) When studying the assessment reports for profiles of strengths and weaknesses in dyslexia, Everatt et al. (2008), in their research, identified that students with dyslexia scored high on tests in non-verbal reasoning, creativity and spatial span/visuo-spatial short term memory which is

"Identification and assessment of dyslexia empowers educators on how to support students with learning disabilities and what intervention strategies would be of benefit."

typically considered as a strength in those with dyslexia. It is these strengths that Gladwell identified that dyslexics use to 'capitalise' when learning. Weaknesses in literacy, phonological measures and processing speed were also identified, again a typical observation in assessment for dyslexia and where compensatory strategies will need to be developed to support learning. Such highs and lows in assessment are referred to as "spiky profiles" and are well recognised in talented students who have dyslexia. (Rose, 2009; Eide and Eide, 2011). In fact, it is the highs in the assessment profile that can give dyslexics and their parents some hope in the knowledge that they are good at something. The diagnosis also gives them the security that professional help will be given to them in their education, or at least they should be able to access it. For example, in Singapore, when a student is diagnosed with dyslexia they are eligible for funding from the Ministry of Education (MOE) for remediation under the MOE-aided DAS Literacy Programme (MAP)* (Quek, 2016) (*now known as the DAS Main Literacy Programme, MLP). Understanding the diagnosis and what it means will also alleviate the worry for the child who might have been thinking that because of their failure to learn to read that they were stupid or not smart enough (Ingesson, 2007; Rack 1997).

Understanding the learning problem leads to remediation methods appropriate for students with dyslexia. A remediation programme includes "effective classroom instruction... and powerful intervention support ... from a classroom teacher [who] is engaging, systematic and explicit [in their] instruction in all the critical components of literacy development (i.e. phonemic awareness and phonics, fluency, comprehension, vocabulary, spelling and writing), and they will also need extra support ... in small group instruction [that] is differentiated based on student needs." (Torgesson, Forman and Wagner, 2014, p. 124-125). The right intervention leads to a student's success, however, not all students with dyslexia have access to the 'right' intervention method (Shaywitz, Morris and Shaywitz, 2008). Don McCabe (2002), a dyslexic, in his book "How to teach a dyslexic", claims that dyslexia is also a result of bad teaching techniques and materials and a curriculum that doesn't support the dyslexic learner. Foss (2013) advocates that teachers need to 'teach' and not just present information to students. Teachers should not assume that the student has learned. Linda Austin (2016), in her article on 'Dyslexia Friendly Teaching', reveals that in the UK 52% of teachers did not receive training on dyslexia and 74% were not satisfied with the teacher training given to them to support dyslexic students. All teachers will have a student with dyslexia in their classroom, so these statistics are very worrying. This is a subject that was explored by Gwernan-Jones and Burden (2009) in their study on teacher attitudes towards learning difficulties which found that teachers remained unclear on how to teach them. It implies that we are not equipping our educators with the necessary tools to be able to support dyslexic learners. When reading the stories of many adult dyslexics, like Don McCabe (McCabe, 2002), Ben Foss (Foss, 2013), Thomas West (West, 2005) and

Neil Alexander-Passe (Alexander-Passe, 2010) and the collection of stories in the book "Embrace a Different Kind of Mind" (Hewes, 2015), this theme is mentioned over and over again.

What is the reality for a dyslexic student in today's learning environment? Is their dyslexia a desirable difficulty as described by Gladwell (2014), and will it force them to develop skills that otherwise would have lain dormant? A student with dyslexia learns differently from others (Austin, 2016; Snowling, 2013; Shaywitz, Morris and Shaywitz, 2008) and some students respond to remediation better and quicker than others but what is it true of all of dyslexic learning is that the students must work much harder than their non-dyslexic peers (Cogan and Flecker, 2004). Research from Nicolson and Fawcett (2010) on their cerebellum theory sheds some light on the amount of practice it takes for a dyslexic to automatise learning. The 'square root rule' defines the amount of time it takes for dyslexics to become automatic at learning. What their research found is that "if a skill takes a normal child 'X' repetitions to master, it would take a dyslexic child X1.5 repetitions." Simply explained, if a normal child takes 25 repetitions to master a task then the dyslexic child will take 125 times to master the same task or 5 times longer. (Nicolson and Fawcett, 2010, p. 87). The implication of this finding is that it takes a dyslexic child a lot longer to master tasks and the harder the task is to master the exponentially harder it is to learn.

This extra practice puts the dyslexic at a significant disadvantage in learning and can mean that there may never be enough time to learn all that is required in the time allocated in lessons. Dyslexics may never catch up with their peers resulting in them falling behind. The learning journey for dyslexics can be fraught with difficulty if they are not provided with the correct support, some students never catch up to their peers and it is true that some dyslexics never read unless they have to (Nicolson and Fawcett, 2010). Stanovich (2009) said that the consequence of this is the 'Matthew Effect', where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Because students with dyslexia do not read as well or as much as their non-dyslexic peers they fall behind, so does their vocabulary and indeed the number of words that they are exposed to. The more they don't read the less they progress and the further they fall behind. Nicolson and Fawcett (2010) discuss this concept and note that the issue is actually worse than this; the more you fall behind in school the less you learn, the more you fail and therefore the more you fall behind, it is a vicious cycle. Research has shown many serious negative life effects of dyslexia, and as Alexander-Passe states, "dyslexia on the whole is a negative disorder" (Alexander-Passe, 2011, p. 3). Indeed, Gladwell (2014) talks about the many dyslexics who don't compensate for their dyslexia and as a result are in prison. This fact is mentioned in the Rose Report (2009), at a specific request of the British Dyslexia Association in the hope that the review would improve the situation for dyslexic

prisoners. Undeniably, the Rose Report was commissioned to ensure the best support for students with dyslexia is provided in the UK, its aim is to address the negative outcomes of dyslexia and to ensure the best quality of intervention is provided to support students with dyslexia. The Matthew Effect is an example of an 'undesirable difficulty'.

Sally Shaywitz in her book, "Overcoming Dyslexia" (Shaywitz, 2003) discusses at length the supporting accommodations for dyslexic learners she calls them, "building a bridge to success". Shaywitz shares the many ways that educators can support dyslexic students and indeed empower dyslexics to take control of their own educational pursuits. One of the most important recommendations is the need for extra time. Shaywitz, claims that dyslexia 'robs a person of time' (p. 314). So, providing extra time on assignments and exams because of their slow reading and processing speed will enable them to be on the 'same playing field' with their peers. Teaching programmes for dyslexic learners should also understand the amount of practice and reconsolidation of learning that is necessary for dyslexic learners. Repetition and unique learning methods such as mnemonics, colour coding text, mind maps, and the use of assistive technology are all key features of any good practice learning programme. A multisensory approach also uses Visual-Auditory-Kinaesthetic-Tactile (VAKT) methods in most of its instruction and is used with young learners especially when learning letter sound relationships. (Elliott and Grigorenko, 2014; Wong, 2014). But it is the concept of time that is important to note with dyslexic learners. They may not catch up in the same amount of time, but over time, they eventually will. Many dyslexics are 'late bloomers' when it comes to education and if they have persevered with their learning, they will eventually achieve their goals (Shaywitz, 2003; Foss, 2013; West, 2009; Davis 1997). West (2005) observes that easy things in primary school can be quite hard but for some dyslexics the hard things in university and high-level work can be surprisingly easy because of the distinctive talents and capabilities that are often not evident until late teens and adulthood. So, it is understandable that when we review the success of dyslexics we look toward adult dyslexics. Adults have had the time to find their specialty, their niche, and have had the chance to succeed. This is something we must tell parents of young dyslexics, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

This is where individual coping strategies and learning styles are important for the dyslexic learner. It is because of the poor automaticity that dyslexics have in learning that makes them approach learning with a 'greater mindfulness' as Eide and Eide (2011) explain. It is because of the extra effort they need to put into learning that 'forces' individuals with dyslexia to 'innovate and experiment' with the learning process to find better ways of learning and doing things. It is interesting that the word 'force' is used by the Eide's similar to Gladwell's statement 'forces you to develop skills that otherwise may have lain dormant'. (Gladwell, 2014, p. 124).

These skills are compensatory learning strategies that a dyslexic will use in conjunction with their natural talents to succeed. Ask any educational therapist at DAS who works with dyslexic students and they will say that the type of skills that a dyslexic student needs to succeed is resilience and will-power. In a study by Firth, Greaves and Frydenberg (2010) from Australia, they identified that adolescent dyslexics abilities in sport played an important role in compensating for the difficulties they experienced in academic work. In a follow-up study on pre-teen subjects by Firth et al. (2013) on an inclusive school-based resilience programme it was noted that dyslexics reported to develop good coping strategies in learning and were equal to their non-dyslexic peers. Tough, (2013) in his book, "How Children Succeed" identifies, among many positive learning traits, that 'grit' is a quality that many successful students have. Grit is that unswerving dedication to succeed, people with grit take setbacks in their stride and are single-mindedly focused on their goals. In a lot of ways, the most successful dyslexics we see in the adult world, display a lot of 'grit'. Foss (2013), declares that attitude also matters! Attitude towards learning will ensure that dyslexic students apply their strengths at school and beyond. The ability to master emotional coping skills provides the best outcomes in learning. Foss has developed an instrument to measure and analyse these coping strategies and attributes. The core areas measured are resilience, self-awareness, proactivity, emotional stability, goal setting, social support and possibility thinking. All good qualities that all students should have but work especially well for dyslexic students where they need to work much harder than their normal peers.

Returning to the special talents of dyslexics the research is abundant. The majority of it is delivered in case studies of individuals from all walks of life who have succeeded despite, or in some cases, because of their dyslexia. (Hewes, 2015; Nicolson, 2015; Gladwell, 2014; Foss, 2013; Alexander-Passe, 2011; Eide and Eide, 2011; West, 2009; Loncraine, 2004; McNulty, 2003; McCabe, 2002; Davis, 1997). Claims are made that individuals with dyslexia are more creative and gravitate to more creative pursuits, although Wolff (2011) suspects that dyslexics with superior creative ability are just a subgroup of the dyslexic population. This sub-group theory is similar to the current doctoral research by Kannangara (2015), where she has identified two groups of dyslexics. "Thriving Dyslexics" who focus on signature strengths such as grit, hope and a growth mind-set and "Languishing Dyslexics" who are failing and not meeting the challenges of learning. Von Karolyi et al. (2003), linked dyslexia to talent and found that dyslexics have an enhanced

"Grit is that unswerving dedication to succeed, people with grit take setbacks in their stride and are single-mindedly focused on their goals."

visual-spatial talent. Wolff and Lundberg (2002) and Wolff (2011) found that the incidence of dyslexia was very high among art students at university. Colgin (2011), a dyslexic, in his paper discusses the many famous artists who are dyslexic. West (2005, 2009) noted that the visual digital technology industry is full of dyslexics with superior spatial abilities. Schneps, Rose and Fischer (2007) identified visuospatial talents in dyslexics. Logan (2009) found that there was a significantly higher incidence of dyslexia in entrepreneurs and that the strategies they used to overcome their dyslexia was to effectively delegate, having excellent communication skills, building and developing employees in their organisation and using others to compensate for their individual weaknesses, for example, employing people to write for them. Loncraine (2004), a dyslexic and a writer with a PhD in English Literature, identified that many dyslexics study at university although she recognised they needed more recognition and support. Everatt, Steffert and Smythe (1999) identified that dyslexic adults have a more innovative style of thinking and that dyslexics need to develop creative skills because the learning environment emphasises the need for literacy skills, in other words education forces dyslexics to develop creative and innovative solutions in learning. Actually, successful dyslexics can be found in all fields, as Nicolson (2015) details in his book "Positive Dyslexia" where he shares "The Dyslexia Hall of Fame". Nicolson also identified that there is a significantly greater number of skills in dyslexic students compared to their normal peers and that they keep developing their strengths well into adulthood.

In the book, 'Dyslexic Advantage' by Eide and Eide (2011), they discuss the unique strengths that dyslexics have. Using evidence from fMRI studies of the brain and that the brain functions differently for individuals with dyslexia this reveals strengths or 'core features' that dyslexics have. They call these core features of dyslexics MIND strengths and are, (M) material reasoning, (I) interconnected reasoning, (N) narrative reasoning and (D) dynamic reasoning. These MIND-strengths give dyslexics advantages in big picture thinking, conceptualising, analytical thinking and excellent episodic memory. Eide and Eide encourage dyslexics to use these MIND strengths to enhance their compensatory strategies when learning. Ron Davis (1997), a dyslexic, and author of "The Gift of Dyslexia", explains about how dyslexics can master many skills faster than the average person and that when a dyslexic has the opportunity to learn experientially they can master things better. Davis points out that this is a skill that grows over time, and that it may not fully develop till the dyslexic is out of school. As a consequence, we see success in adults. Finally, Nicolson (2015) discusses the recent theory of Delayed Neural Commitment (DNC) and suggests that failing to be automatic in learning gives the dyslexic an opportunity to be novel and creative in their thinking, and this provides a mechanism for success. Although there are exceptionally talented dyslexics, acknowledges Nicolson, he claims that DNC is a more general trait in dyslexia and gives dyslexics an advantage in learning, that is however, if the dyslexic has not faced too many

negative situations in learning. The DNC theory comes very close to being the 'desirable difficulty' that Gladwell (2014) refers to.

For dyslexia to be a desirable difficulty, early identification and early intervention is critical to the success of dyslexics. We need to ensure that young students are told early in their educational journey that they can achieve their goals and that they can be successful. They need to know that good things are achieved out of hard work. They need to know that failure is a part of learning, each failure is an opportunity to understand something again. They need to identify their own learning style as well as accept support from those who know how to teach them the way they need to learn. They need to know their weaknesses so they can work on them and create effective strategies to get around them and they need to use their talents and strengths to give them an edge in learning. Education systems need to be able to step back and look at the assessment of students and find better ways in ensuring students are being identified, taught and measured effectively. Not all measurement should need to be completed by pen and paper testing. Every teacher needs to be trained in how to teach a student with learning difficulties. Every teacher needs to teach, not 'show'. Every teacher needs to understand the different students and their needs in the classroom. Ultimately, the success of an individual with dyslexia comes down to their own attitude to learning and succeeding. So, is dyslexia a desirable difficulty? It definitely can be, with the right support, dyslexics can harness their talent and develop learning strategies to see ultimate success in learning.

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