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Dean Bragonier and Noticeability: The man, the model and the need

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Preface

In preparing this article, as first author I am conscious that it may not fit with some people's definition of an academic article, because only positive assessments of Noticeability are provided here. Let me fill you in on the background. Dean Bragonier was invited to present his work in this journal but was unable to deal with the quantity of writing because of his dyslexia, and opted to give the journal an interview instead. This approach instantiates that adopted by his company NoticeAbility, which deliberately moves young adolescents away from reading and writing, where they struggle, to a workshop format working on projects in small groups, where they can show leadership, teamwork and demonstrate their strengths. This type of research approach is proving remarkably successful these days with an emphasis on the whole child, executive function, including self-control, selective attention, cognitive inhibition, working memory and cognitive flexibility, (Diamond, 2013) as well as self-esteem, providing an environment where they can challenge themselves and show their strengths, with interventions targeting self-image in order to release the potential for success that may be hidden in these children. NoticeAbility works by including teaching staff as observers of the program, and involving parents, who may all be surprised by the confidence, motivation and effectiveness revealed. It is an approach that could be easily adopted by others, and evaluated more formally within a research setting. The article itself is designed to inspire further research of this type, as well as to offer an alternative to the many articles reflecting failure in this group. As such, it is intended to inspire the reader to consider the strengths in dyslexia, rather than focusing on dyslexia as a deficit, and provides justification from the research literature for the approach adopted.

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Abstract

In this article the authors report an interview between Dean Bragonier, Executive Dyslexic of NoticeAbility, USA and Angela Fawcett, international researcher into dyslexia, and explore the research literature on strengths and weaknesses in dyslexia. The interview was motivated by a series of conversations between the authors, and proposed by Fawcett in order to explore the underlying motivation and rationale for the work of the NoticeAbility group in designing and delivering entrepreneurial curricula for middle school children with dyslexia, in order to highlight their strengths in this area. Inspired by the highly successful keynote presentation by Bragonier at Unite SpLD, 2021, incorporating his research, the article attempts to provide a vehicle to escape any perceived ongoing constraints of dyslexia on academic self-expression from Bragonier, showcasing his motivation and the success of the approach he has been able to adopt in improving the motivation and self-esteem of dyslexic children, and the impact of these programmes on their parents and teachers. His approach is illustrated by the work of his son Bodhi in the recent Magellan Campaign visit to the UK, analysing the impact of positive role models in dyslexia. The article concludes with a review of the Positive dyslexia movement and its impact on dyslexia support.

Keywords:

THE MAN – THE INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

“My mother had knowledge of dyslexia due to her work as a child developmental psychologist. Because she got her PhD from Columbia University in New York, she was able to ask other professionals if they could test me, which they did, and determined I was dyslexic. The fact that I was diagnosed in the 1970s is very progressive, even compared to today where very few people with dyslexia actually get a diagnosis or even understand what dyslexia is for that matter.

One of the main reasons why I'm doing what I do is because of that diagnosis. The result of that diagnosis was that my parents were able to get me the structured literacy I needed to learn how to read. I was placed in private education which allowed me to be in an environment where some of the teachers knew what dyslexia was and were able to support me in the way I need to be supported. However, people in the field of dyslexia will often say that if a child is identified, diagnosed, and receive structure literacy, that they will automatically be a success. But while those steps are absolutely mandatory, it isn't the entire equation for personal empowerment. It's part of the equation. What is also required are tools to build the students self-confidence. From a dyslexic perspective, I had every advantage you could ask for, yet I still felt different and broken as I went through school. I didn't believe that I had any self-worth. Even

with classroom accommodations, a child with dyslexia can feel broken, lazy, and stupid. And when the child has a negative self-perception, it can erase the benefits of literacy and structured intervention.

So, how do we start building self-esteem while students receive all the accommodation they need? If we can couple structured literacy with social emotional learning, students can begin to understand their potential. They can feel confident as they address the challenges of their dyslexia. They can move forward into the world with a new level of confidence as they notice their true potential. I went into this work because of the frustration I felt listening to people from some of the best universities in the United States say, 'We have the answer and its structured literacy.' I can tell you that that is only partially true. But that is not the entire answer. Students require personal empowerment and confidence to succeed.

When I saw this opportunity, I began to tell my story and build a program to enable students to see what they are good at. From this point of view, they can start to create genuine self-confidence. I began to work alongside those diagnosing students and teaching literacy. By adding social emotional learning to the equation, we helped teachers see something they didn't yet realize was missing.

Dyslexia is the same around the world. It doesn't matter if you are in Africa, Asia or America, a person with dyslexia is a person with dyslexia. They have the same traits. They have the same typical kind of behaviour. Dyslexic is neurobiological, not cultural. Our brains have a slightly different construction and wiring. This is frequently noticed under particular circumstances, like learning to read and spell. . Consider for a moment that the human brain is built to speak, see, and to hear. Most of us are born with these abilities. However, writing and reading are artificial communication devices. They are human-made inventions designed to take the invisible, the spoken word, and transform it into something visible. For one reason or another, it is more difficult for people with dyslexia to learn this artificial form of communication. It's not a defect but, instead, simply a difference in the way their brain functions.

In the United States, the biggest obstacle for teachers is getting support from the government and their administrators. Dyslexia is a diagnosis that is protected by federal and state laws. These laws ensure that students are given specific accommodations. However, suppose you have a child diagnosed with dyslexia in your school. In that case, administrators must provide them with evidence-based interventions that are much more expensive than non-evidence-based instruction. So, rather than saying a child has dyslexia, administrators often say that the student has a 'specific learning disability' or a 'language-based learning disability'.

These terms avoid using the word dyslexia. As a result, students with dyslexia receive intervention but not the more expensive type that are routed in evidence. In America, people refer to this battle as the 'reading wars', with some people arguing for evidence-based intervention and others promoting less expensive, less effective intervention. It is the children with dyslexia who suffer from this debate causing unnecessary failure, frustration, and low self-confidence. This is what encouraged me to create a social-emotional learning curriculum.

Through our program, students with dyslexia have the chance to discover what they're good at. Parents observe their children's excitement for the program as they discover they are intelligent and creative not broken or stupid. Finally, a teacher is able to say to the parents, "You are right. Your child is brilliant; he is just in an environment (traditional school) which is not built to recognize what he is good at but, instead, where his weakness lie." After the program, parents are often relieved and encouraged.

In addition to the program's impact on students and parents, we've seen tremendous enthusiasm from the teachers who deliver it. The program enables them to reach students who normally get discouraged which makes them feel guilty because they don't know how to connect with these students. By delivering our program, they learn a different way of working with these students by paying attention to the child's abilities."

Interview ends.

Instructor Training Overview

How do NoticeAbility achieve their positive outcomes? If we consider training for their instructors, this similarly moves away from a deficit focus, focusing instead on a curriculum designed to accentuate dyslexia strengths, building in key aspects of socio-emotional support and executive function to ensure success (following Diamond, 2013), which are now seen as key to success in dyslexia..

Table 1. Feedback from instructor training. NoticeAbility (2020)

It was truly an enlightening, inspiring, and thought-provoking experience.

I used to think dyslexia was a learning disability that was a challenge for students. But now I think that students with dyslexia are a gift and it is our jobs as educators to tap into their strengths and see what they can achieve.

A pre-post design was used to analyse the improvements in knowledge of dyslexia in the NoticeAbility instructors, and their preparedness to engage with dyslexic students. Based on a Wilcoxon signed rank score test, highly significant impact was found for knowledge of dyslexia, with 74% of participants increasing their knowledge and 59% evaluating themselves as better prepared to deal with dyslexia successfully. At the end of the training period, participants were able to successfully navigate around the NoticeAbility system, working both online on the teaching platform and with the printed materials.

Using a net Promoter score based on likelihood of recommending the course, participants achieved a score of 54, where 22 is the average in studies of this type. In order to enhance this learning, opportunities for practical application are provided which have been shown to be the most effective practice (Gates Foundation, 2014). The approach adopted builds on active learning, collaboration and feedback, highlighted in Darling-Hammond et al, 2017).

Table 2. Feedback - what did you gain from instructor training. NoticeAbility (2020)

The opportunity to start to make a positive difference in a student's life.

An understanding of all the things a dyslexic can achieve and that it is not a bad thing to be dyslexic

Educator Capacity

The key to long-term success for students with SpLD (Newman et al., 2011) are two-fold, firstly, supportive and understanding teachers and secondly, close relationships with mentors. At NoticeAbility both of these have been achieved by adopting a strength-based perspective based on a sound understanding of the neuroscience of dyslexia, scaffolded by adult mentors. This unusual perspective allows NoticeAbility to move away from the traditional focus on deficits, to consider instead individual differences and how best to enhance these strengths within an interactive classroom experience geared to success.

Evaluating NoticeAbility

The format for NoticeAbility is based on Critical Disability Theory (Hosking, 2008) that sees disability as socially dictated by a mismatch between the abilities of the child and the school environment in which they are placed. The solution to this in terms of Noticeability is to re-educate all the protagonists, the child, the teacher and the parents so that the environment is more conducive to success for dyslexia, focusing on unique strengths, and avoiding traditional literacy tasks where possible. The techniques involved

include use of audio-visual aids, computers, and a curriculum which highlights known strengths in dyslexia, including Entrepreneurship, Architecture and Art, as well as the opportunities to apply these skills under the lead of a mentor.

In order to evaluate the success of the project, a pilot study using the Stigma Consciousness Questionnaire- Learning Disabilities (SCQ-LD, Daley & Rappolt-Schlichtmann, 2018) was conducted at pre and post-test. This uses a Likert type scale to measure how prepared students are for school and their readiness to improve, persevere, and solve problems creatively. The results indicated a significant improvement at level $p=0.01$. Feedback from the parents endorsed the improvements in self-esteem (82%), confidence (73%), peer relationships and attitudes to school (64%), with teachers providing a 100% endorsement for all but attitudes which showed 50% improvement. After the course, students reported significantly increased academic tenacity in planning ahead to achieve their goals, deal with challenging problems, and solve these more creatively.

The System in Practice

Over the period 2021-2022 and beyond, NoticeAbility, comprising Dean Bragnier, his wife Sally and their teenage son Bohdi, set out to recreate the journey that Magellan undertook as an explorer in 1519, circumnavigating the world. Realising the limitations of running a not for profit organisation based in the USA, this group sought to extend their reach worldwide, by setting up free workshops for dyslexic students and their educators across the world. Rather than focusing on any perceived limitations, the program was devised to allow participants to sample from the rich curriculum which the team had developed. The topics available included entrepreneurship, art, engineering and design, all areas in which dyslexic students have shown exceptional strengths. See for example the study by Wolf and Lundberg, 2002, on the prevalence of dyslexia in art students.

Raising funds through sponsorship, a programme of travel in 3 phases, across 3 regions Worldwide was set up, building on existing links with dyslexia organisations worldwide, to crystallise this network of organisations into a coherent whole. The early stages of the COVID pandemic were used to develop remote learning programmes with isolated communities in Central Africa and Australia. Before setting off on this epic journey, a series of workshops and meetings were planned, delivered free to students, schools and parents, who provided the premises for the workshops to take place. Schools and organisations that took part in a full 3-hour workshop were given free access to a module from the curriculum for use within their school.

A report in September 2022, highlighted the ongoing activities in Phase 1, in Europe and Morocco, with an unanticipated level of programme adoption in England, Malta and the Netherlands. Each workshop was led by the dyslexic instructor, Dean for

entrepreneurship, Bodhi for engineering and design, and Sally for art, with the students involved encouraged to play an active role in leadership and execution of the tasks involved. Families were encouraged to observe in order to help them recognise the untapped potential of their dyslexic children. Dr Helen Ross, trustee of the British Dyslexia association commented following a workshop in Swindon

“Watching Dean and Bodhi deliver their empowering workshops together was a joy and a privilege. They have such a profound understanding of the challenges of dyslexia as they are both dyslexic, but they use that understanding and their strong father-son bond to empower and edify young people to see their own strengths.”

Dr Helen Ross, personal communication.

Here we provide a review of the contribution of Bodhi Bragonier, then aged 13, in leading 2 full day workshops in Engineering and Architecture. It seems that Bodhi was the inspiration behind the Magellan project, having tried to set up three businesses at the unusually early age of 7! The review is provided by Graham Humphries, Governor of Moon Hall Educational Trust, a school in the UK for dyslexic children from year 3-11, which benefits from small class sizes and a family ethos. Moon Hall took part in the Magellan project, when Bodhi was nominated for the British Dyslexia association’s Outstanding Young Person Award, 2022. The Magellan project presents personalised learning in small free workshops involving dyslexic participants and their families, as well as their teachers, emphasising positive aspects of dyslexia.

Review for Bodhi Bragonier for the British Dyslexia award for Outstanding young dyslexics. Graham Humphries, Moon Hall Educational Trust.

“Bodhi is an inspirational teenage role model for his generation. As a “pure bred” dyslexic (both his parents are dyslexic) he talks about his dyslexia with pride. He is a World-Wide Ambassador helping raise well-being and aspiration amongst dyslexic children. An advocate for their “special difference.” He is a poet, entrepreneur, and wonderful enthusiast for all. He has created a business to sell love notes. (acts of kindness) He has invented and marketed a board game to help solve family disagreements. He has formed Bodhi’ Boot Camp (BBC) to aid fitness.

He has led seminars and workshops alone and with his Father for dyslexic students, their parents/carers and Teachers with confidence and panache. He has travelled the World, recently Ghana, Thailand, Indonesia and England to promote the abilities of dyslexic children. He is passionate that the cycle of failure so many dyslexic pupils experience, that so often leads to poor behaviour, or becoming the “class clown” is diagnosed, remediated and redirected. This path, for so many dyslexics leads to addiction, crime and imprisonment and he aspires to break this cycle.

Promoting the "Dyslexic Advantage" is in his soul. He is already beginning to understand neurodiversity and change agents to develop Dyslexic Empowerment. In his own poetic words, he encapsulates the dyslexic experience: "School can be hard when the words are askew. And everyone else is faster than you... When I smell the paper and hear the rustle I have an inner tussle..."He encourages confidence, self-worth. He tells dyslexic youngsters "Do things you love"; "Find where you lose time". See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YTebjEEbK6Q> "

Graham Humphries, trustee Moon Hall Educational Trust

Following up on the impact of the time Bodhi spent with Moon Hall school, Graham Humphries, while recognising how difficult it was to formally evaluate such a scheme, was able to confirm informally that there had been a surge in confidence within the pupils, which seemed to still be in place in ongoing surveys within the school.

Background. The need for a model of this type

Literacy has long been recognised as the key to success in education, for children from all backgrounds, with children who struggle in the early years doubly disadvantaged. Unfortunately, there can be no doubt that UK schools are not being as effective as hoped in remediating reading failure (OECD, 2015), ranked 22nd for reading, notably one of the lowest of the English-speaking countries, although recent ranks have shown some improvement. However, the situation has been deteriorating further given the increasing demands on schools in terms of recent cuts to their funding systems, which will have continuing impact on the provision of support for struggling learners. The full, cumulative cost to the state of failure in literacy has been estimated at £45,000 per child once future educational, employment and health consequences are considered (KPMG, 2006).

In 2019, a report from the All Party Parliamentary group (APPG) on dyslexia in the UK on the Human costs of dyslexia, identified that 95% of children felt frustrated by their dyslexia and 82% preferred to hide their difficulties through embarrassment (APPG, 2019). Moreover, the report also indicated that a student with dyslexia is 3.5 times more likely to be excluded than their non-dyslexic peers. This has been exacerbated by the impact of COVID, (BDA 2021) with 95% of parents feeling inadequate to support their children at home, and a greater impact on both adults and children with dyslexia based on the need to process remotely in the UK, and similar findings in Spain and Italy (Forteza-Forteza et al, 2021, Bachenis et al, 2021).

In line with the interview with Dean Bragonier, there has been a long history of reports of low self-esteem and self-image in dyslexia, with early work from Humphrey and Mullins (2002) identifying a range of issues. This is based on the concept that literacy is

typically seen as correlating with intelligence, and by implication those who cannot read perceive themselves to be stupid. It is not inevitable that dyslexic children suffer from low self-esteem, it depends on the understanding of their difficulties, and the match between the child, the family and their school environment. For example, research from Burdett and Burdon (2005) has shown that dyslexic children attending specialist schools do not suffer from the low self-esteem that has typically been identified in dyslexia.

More recently Glazzard, (2010) indicated that early diagnosis and understanding has the most positive impact on self-esteem. Key proponents of the importance of self-image in success for dyslexia across the age range include Alexander-Passe, (e.g Alexander-Passe, 2006, 2010, 2015), based on post traumatic success, a theme Alexander Passe (2020) returns to in his most recent book on entrepreneurship and dyslexia. In 2020, Giovagnoli et al examined differences in self-esteem and anxiety in dyslexic and control children, identifying significant increases in problems in dyslexia in adolescence in comparison with younger children. It is hardly surprising that the experience of continued failure and stress, plus the stigmatisation that has been associated with dyslexia (Pinel, 1999) impacts on feelings of self-worth in this way. Furthermore even when dyslexic children achieve success, they attribute this to external factors, rather than to their own abilities and efforts, (Lithari, 2019) in what the author refers to as a 'fractured academic ability'. Most recently, in 2023, in a series of studies presenting theory and data, Wilmot et al (2023a) identified a feeling of 'otherness' in dyslexic children, with exhausted and overwhelmed children and mothers, due to a poor person/environment fit leading to behavioural meltdowns and school refusal. In related theoretical research, Wilmot et al (2023b) published a scoping review, identifying 98 articles investigating mental health and dyslexia, and found a preponderance of work with primary school children, and a tendency to rely on parental reports, emphasising the need for further work with older children.

There are elements within Dean Bragonier's interview that suggest poor choices have sometimes been made in his life, which he recognises himself, that could easily have detracted from future success. If we consider the literature on dyslexia and other learning disabilities emerging from both the UK and the USA, it becomes clear that there are heightened risks of maladaptive behaviour for adolescents and young adults with dyslexia which can blight the lives and life chances of those who experience this. For example, a major report in the UK on 2029 prisoners at Chelmsford identified 53% as dyslexic (Hewitt-Main 2012), but noted that they would rather remain incarcerated in their cells than engage with traditional education classes in prison.

Jackie Hewitt-Main, a successful business woman who had recently been diagnosed as dyslexic at the age of 40, introduced a successful mentoring system led by prisoners, focusing on strengths and understanding of dyslexia, in order to build IT and social skills, which reduced recidivism to a mere 5.9% in this population (Hewitt-Main, 2021). The links between dyslexia and crime are not inevitable, but depend on the lived experience of

the child with dyslexia. This is demonstrated in an article from Willcutt and Pennington (2000) drawing on a large sample of dyslexic twins and their probands, which indicated higher rates of internalising and externalising disorders in the dyslexic group. However, this was not associated with aggression, delinquency, oppositional defiant disorder or conduct disorder. Interestingly, this group who formed part of a longitudinal study are likely to have received good support in dealing with their dyslexia, and this may well have mitigated their risk of negative outcomes.

In the USA, heightened risk for low educational attainment, unemployment, substance abuse and criminal behaviour have been identified as a consequence of inadequately supported dyslexia. This includes 32% drop out from school, (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014) and reduced rates of 41% completing college compared to 59% of their typically achieving peers (Newman et al. 2011; National Center for Education Statistics). Moreover, this impacts on career development for those who did not complete high school (Newman et al., 2011), with 38% of this group looking for work for more than 6 months, which makes them at risk of substance abuse and criminal behaviour. Moreover, Newman et al (2011) note that 76% of this group have had some involvement with the criminal justice system in the USA. A remarkably similar level of learning disabilities has been identified in the USA as in the UK, 55% within 8 years of leaving school (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014, p. 25). Further studies in the UK have identified learning disabilities ranging from severe to borderline in detention centres (Kirk & Reid, 2001; Dyslexia Action, 2005). Overall, twice as many dyslexic as typical achievers are caught up in the criminal justice system (Macdonald, 2012, p.430).

This also links to risks arising from addiction and substance abuse, with twice as many dyslexic as non-dyslexic peers exhibiting a range of characteristic risks for substance abuse, between 40 and 60 % (Califano, 2000, p. 10). The costs of these addictions are high, an average \$148,767 per year to imprison one individual (Justice Policy Institute, 2014). Moreover, the penalties for low educational achievement are financial, earning between \$10,000 - \$36,000 less than college graduates (US Census Bureau, 2012). Costs to US society can range from \$300,000 every year (Sum et al., 2009) to \$500 billion per year (Califano, 2000). Conversely, the outcomes for dyslexics who manage to overcome their difficulties suggests a very different range of outcomes. Research in the UK, for example, has indicated that those dyslexic students who have been successful in accessing a degree course are at significantly lower risk for substance addiction of all types than their non-dyslexic peers, (Wilcockson et al, 2016, Wilcockson, Mcelhatton and Fawcett, 2018).

It seems that dyslexia can be characterised by either monumental success or failure. Interest in high achieving individuals has burgeoned over the years, but the majority of interest has focused on individuals with exemplary success (see for example Fink, 1998) who seem to be characterised by a passion for their subject which has helped them overcome their reading difficulties. There is not only evidence for more life affirming

success in this group, but also consistent evidence emerging for not only a higher incidence of entrepreneurs amongst dyslexics (35%, Logan, 2009) but also that 40% of all self-made millionaires are dyslexic (Tulip Financial Report, 2003). Thomas West in the USA, dyslexic himself, has written for many years on the extraordinary capacities amongst the dyslexic community for visual thinking, identifying a series of Nobel prize winners in one dyslexic family (West, 1999). Nevertheless, those who have tried to quantify this success experimentally, have largely failed to identify superior strengths in controlled conditions.

However, more recently, Nicolson and his colleagues (Nicolson, 2015, Agahi, 2015, Sepulveda, 2018) have identified a range of signature strengths in dyslexia, which could potentially be found in those who have been successful enough to reach university. This is characterised as big picture thinking, and they caution that for each individual dyslexic, it is important to identify their relative strengths and work towards these. There seems to be so much potential for success or failure within the dyslexic population, and that an appropriate educational experience which draws out the potential for strengths can be key in achieving a good outcome for this group. Kannagara (2015), in a similar vein, presents an article based in her own experience of dyslexia, differentiating between languishing and thriving dyslexics based on a fixed or growth mindset. Later, Kannagara and colleagues (2018) adapted Seligman's questionnaire for dyslexia and compared the character strengths of dyslexia in the UK and USA, finding that the 240-item questionnaire was too long for most dyslexics to complete successfully.

In terms of strengths, it is here that NoticeAbility, the system designed by Dean Bragonier seems to come into play. The concept of NoticeAbility is built on empowering dyslexics to discover their abilities whilst still in middle school, before their struggles in secondary school impact their progress too far for recovery. They have identified a range of protective factors that can reduce the odds of failure and help to bolster ongoing success. Key amongst these are the following, adapted from NoticeAbility 2020 "a supportive home life, a strong sense of connection to friends and community, and a strong sense of self-confidence" (NCLD, Student Voices Executive Summary, 2015 p. 3).

The theoretical basis of NoticeAbility has been drawn from the work of Hosking, (2008) in the Critical Disability Theory, encouraging a focus on the 'knowledge, skills and unique abilities' of those with disabilities, rather than accepting the socially constructed premise based on mishandling disability, that all disabilities are inevitably impaired'. Successful engagement must include not only the student but also their family, building on the neuroscience of dyslexia, the work of the Eide's, (Eide and Eide, 2012), and redefining dyslexia in terms of strengths rather than simply weaknesses, building the cognitive assets of the student towards successful outcomes.

This change in direction in understanding the strengths as well as the weaknesses of dyslexia has led to an approach within research which emphasises wellbeing, both

emotional and mental. So, we find successful interventions for dyslexia incorporating Mindfulness (Nakita and Thoma, 2024), and Zarei and Yarigaravesh (2024) and an interest in the development of a growth mindset in this group. Furthermore, a recent review by Smith-Spark and Gordon identified the need to consider automaticity and procedural learning in relation to executive function, implicating issues such as working memory and fluency as key to successful performance. Studies including Fara and colleagues 2024, have shown that executive function-based reading training impacts on functional connections between and within sensory networks in dyslexia.

A systematic review of research by Gibby-Leversuch and colleagues (2021) found that positive attributions, good social relationships and positive attitudes towards neurodiversity engendered feelings of self-worth in dyslexia, whereas those who displayed negative feelings of self-worth were influenced by stereotypes of laziness and stupidity that others have associated with dyslexia.

The Importance of the Role Model in Positive Psychology

Why is it so important that dyslexic participants, their teachers and their families identify with positive role models for success? The literature is clear that dyslexic children are susceptible to low self-esteem and feelings of self-worth that hinders their progress even more than their dyslexia itself (Zupardo et al, 2023) It seems that these feelings have been accentuated post COVID and distance learning (British Dyslexia association, 2021, Forteza-Forteza et al, 2021, Bachenis et al, 2021). Studies have also noted the impact of low SES on children in Singapore, in terms of access to remote learning and immediacy of feedback (Yong and Asmuri, 2021). It could well be argued that lockdown has provided a significant set of new difficulties for children with dyslexia, compounding their original difficulties and making them more heavily entrenched.

It is by no means uncommon for teachers to assume that a dyslexic child 'should try harder', indeed this was a common refrain throughout the author's son's school days many years ago, despite his formal diagnosis. Similarly, many families will accept that their child is lazy or disengaged, particularly if they have had difficulties themselves and have struggled over the years with undiagnosed dyslexia. Such parents find it harder to engage with authority figures and provide emotional support for their dyslexic children. The child themselves may internalise these perceptions of themselves, reinforcing their limitations, and this may hinder their progress even further. Participation in the NoticeAbility workshops can change those perceptions, which may still linger in the teaching profession, particularly when led by an adolescent, such as Bodhi.

For a dyslexic child born to dyslexic parents as Bodhi Bragonier was, there are two clear choices. If the parents hold a growth mindset and have dealt well with their dyslexia, as shown by Dean Bragonier and his wife, Sally Taylor, the child internalises that dyslexia is

not simply a deficit but a difference in processing. On the other hand, if the parents are embittered by a sense of failure based on their dyslexia, they will find it hard to engage with their children in the same struggles that blighted their own lives as children, and their responses may be negative and destructive to incipient strengths.

In conclusion, it seems that parents have a crucial role to play in the success of dyslexic children, in identifying their strengths and encouraging them to follow their passions. Movements such as NoticeAbility can be key in this progress, encouraging the whole family to adopt a growth mindset where dyslexia is concerned, focusing on the strengths and identifying the passions that drive their dyslexic children and providing the best conditions they can to help them fulfil their potential. Teachers and instructors have a responsibility to relate to the whole child, rather than just to their disabilities, promoting their strengths as well as aiding their difficulties. The adoption and understanding of Positive dyslexia in all its aspects, can provide the first steps in moving dyslexic children and adults from languishing to thriving, from failure to success (Kannangara, 2105).

In conclusion, it is important to note that the majority of research into self-esteem and well-being is based on questionnaire studies which are vulnerable to how the participant is feeling at the time. It can be quite possible to answer differently in the morning and the afternoon, depending on the participant's current mood or recent life experiences. What we are trying to address here, is the creation of a more positive growth mindset which will allow dyslexic students to achieve their potential. There are many approaches that can do this, but in some ways the results are nebulous and can only really be seen in ongoing success for those who have participated in such approaches. Nevertheless, if this can move a struggling dyslexic student from failure to success, taking part could not be more worthwhile.

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