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# Accessibility Bites: The Gift of Dyslexia

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Supported by Untapped Accessibility

BCcampus

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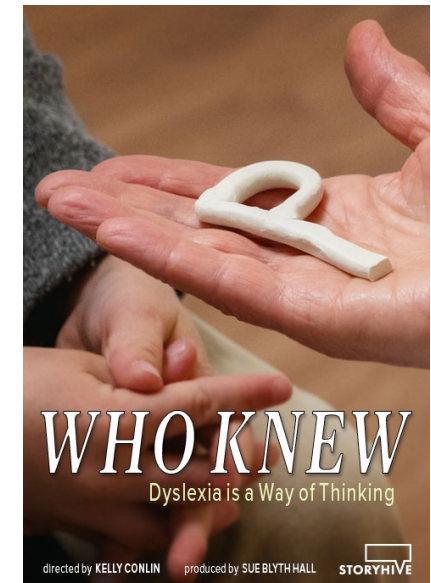
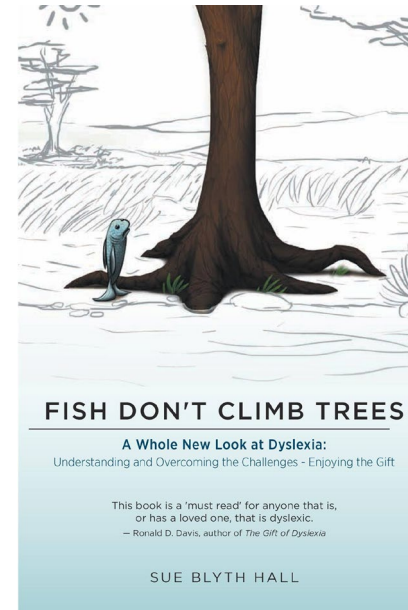
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## PRESENTER

Sue Blyth Hall,  
Author of Fish Don't Climb Trees  
Producer of WHO KNEW Dyslexia is a Way of Thinking  
TEDx Speaker, March 2021  
Davis Method Facilitator  
Proudly Dyslexic



I am using 'dyslexia' as an umbrella term for:

Dyslexia – difficulty with words

Dyscalculia – difficulty with counting

Dysgraphia – difficulty with writing

Dyspraxia – difficulty doing

ADD – Attention Deficit Disorder

ADHD – Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder

Auditory Processing Disorder

Visual Processing Disorder



because they share a common origin



The Gift of Dyslexia is shared by one third of the population

The official figures are 10-15%

However, for everyone tested, there will be a dyslexic who is not tested

A more accurate figure would be one-third of the population

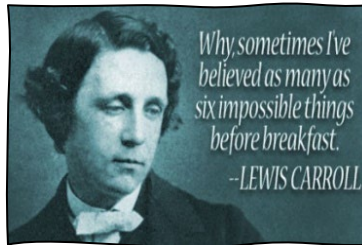
A full list of 37 Characteristics can be found here:

<https://positivedyslexia.com/about-dyslexia/how-to-tell>



The upside of the Gift of Dyslexia results in very talented, creative, inventive, athletic, artistic, empathetic problem-solving entrepreneurs, scientists, authors, strategists, architects, engineers, trades people...

Creative  
Writers



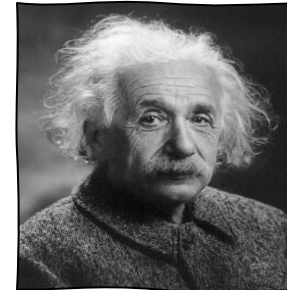
Entrepreneurs



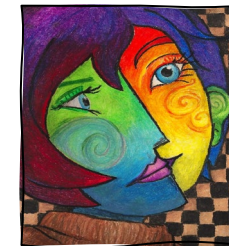
Athletes



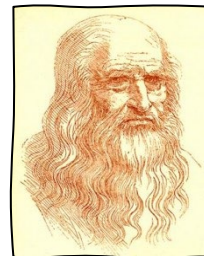
Scientists



Artists &  
Designers



Engineers  
& Architects



Strategists

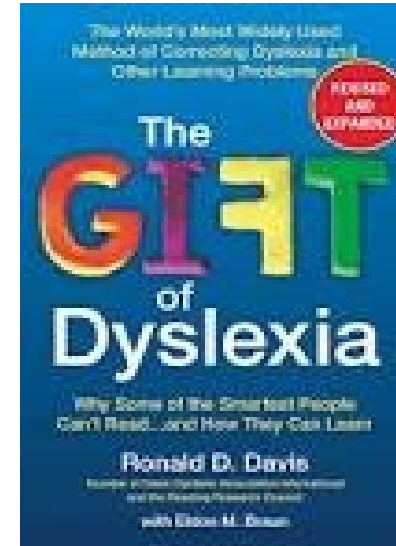


Actors & Directors





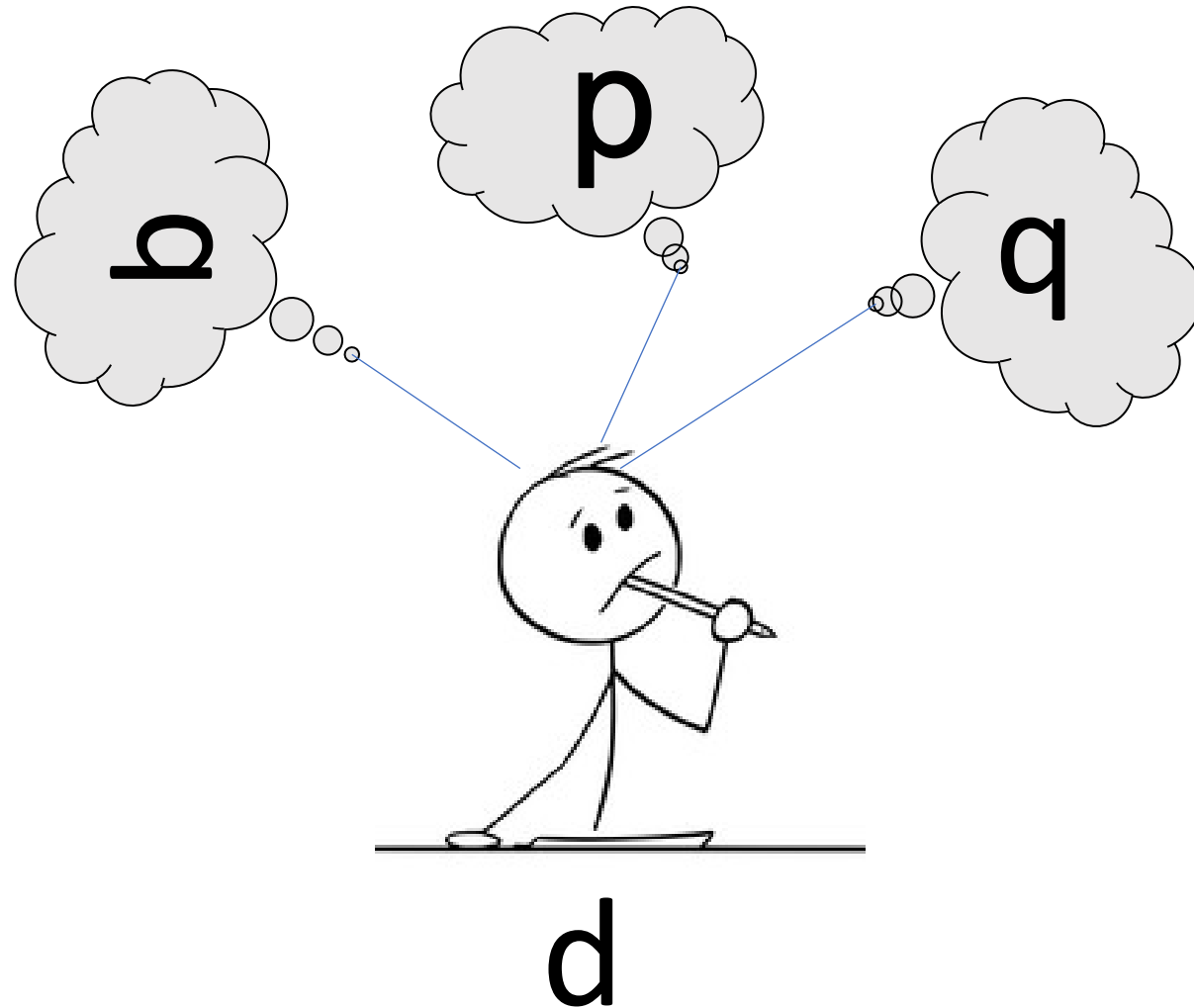
# The Gift of Dyslexia is a Natural Ability to Alter Perception



Our 'gift' of altering perception works well for us  
in the 3D world... a dog is a dog from any perspective



There is a downside to using this 'gift' in the  
2D world of letters and symbols...





# There are two ways of thinking

**Verbally... sound thinkers** have the internal conversation



**Non-verbally... picture thinkers** have the internal film/imaging



and as our education system is predominantly geared towards the sound thinkers... who introduce phonetic reading instruction it becomes obvious that we struggle.

# There are three parts to a letter and a word

1. The meaning 'uh' 'ay' ä,ā,ă

the sound it represents



2. The spelling A, a, a

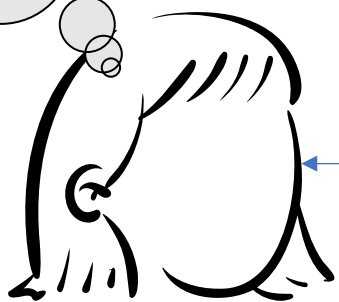
written form

c a t

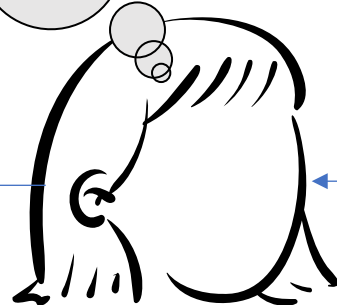
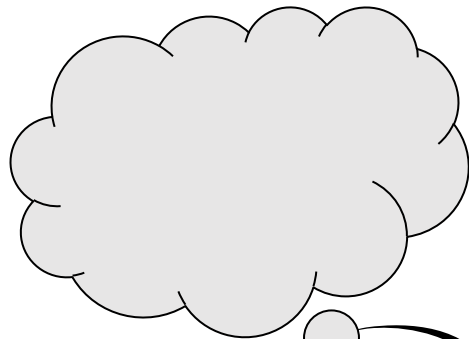
3. How you say them A

pronunciation of letter name

“kat”



“dog”

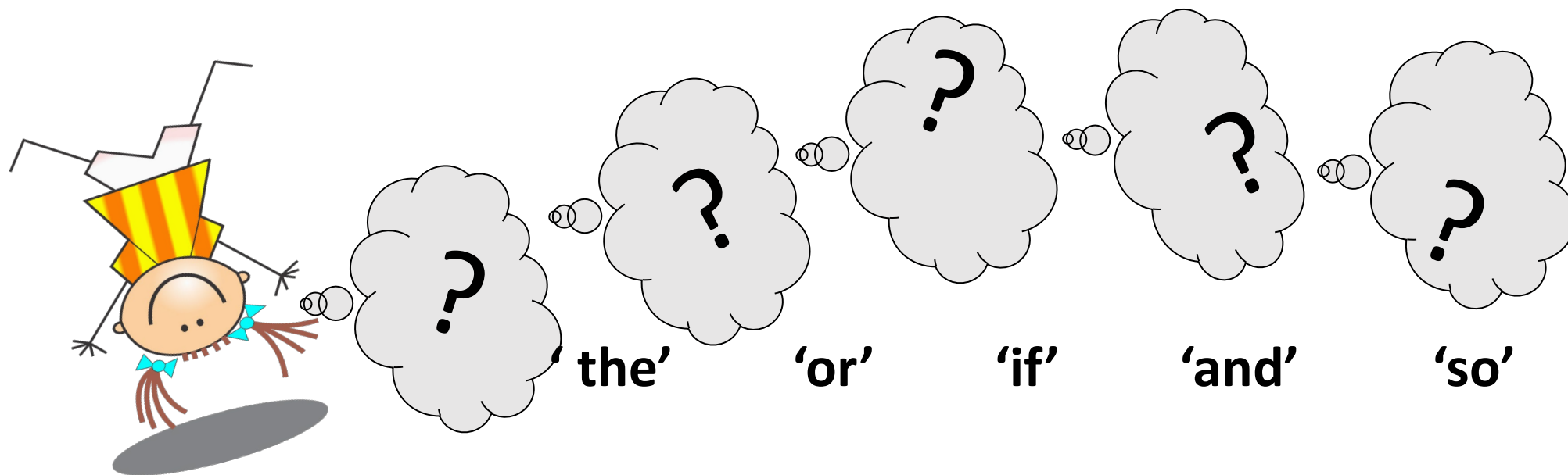


“hegemony”

In one ear and out the other

If image-based thinkers have no picture with which to think, there can be no thinking, understanding or retention.

217 of these little words make up half of what we read, and then there's concepts to add in!



## THE PERIODIC TABLE

By the 19th Century, chemists had made many careful observations of the elements and their compounds. They saw the need to organise their observations by regularities in the properties of the elements. Deciding how to classify the elements was difficult. Metallic elements had some properties in common, but others had properties that varied greatly. The idea of classifying the elements in a meaningful way became a perplexing problem.

## TAKING OUT TRIGGER WORDS

19th Century, chemists  
careful  
observations elements  
compounds.  
need organise  
observations  
regularities  
properties elements.  
Deciding classify  
elements difficult.  
Metallic elements  
properties common,  
properties  
varied greatly. idea  
classifying elements  
meaningful way  
perplexing problem.

TAKING OUT CONCEPTS  
we might be left with  
these pictures...not  
necessarily the correct  
image ?

chemists



properties



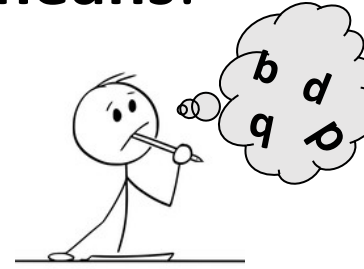
Metallic





## Putting these 3 components together means:

1. If you can alter your perception

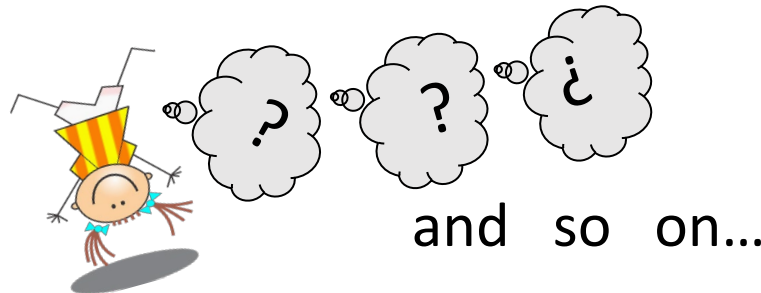


2. If you think in images



and are expected to think with sounds

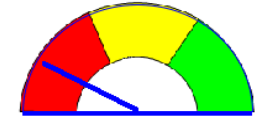
3. If you have no images for **more than half** the words you read



You are very likely to be mis-labeled '**learning disabled**'

# There is a one-on-one Correction Solution for all 3 components

3 Self Management Tools: Release (relaxing)  
Dial (controlling energy levels)  
Focus (controlling perception)



Finding and resolving existing confusions in the 2D symbol,  
alphabet, punctuation marks.



Reading in a visual recognition method and comprehension strategies.

Creating 3D models for the meaning of any word, trigger words, concepts, the  
spelling list.



**AND there are Prevention Solutions derived from the above** from Early Years  
through K-3 designed to ensure the challenges never arise.



# Old Solutions

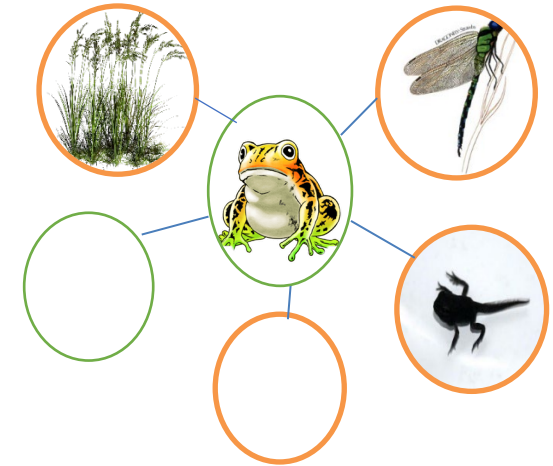
When faced with a challenge we come up with our own way of coping.


- Avoidance
- Concentration – which is exhausting
- The Class Clown
- Denial – that's what I said !
- Dependence – you do it for me, you're so good at that. Current accommodations fall into this last category: speech to text, text to speech, scribes...

When you remove the reason for the challenge the Old Solution falls away

# True Knowledge is Experiential

- we thrive on bullet points
- we thrive on mind mapping with sketches not words
- we find highlighting salient words useful
- we enjoy visual comparisons 'feeling like a doormat'
- we learn by doing, experiencing
- we prefer watching films to reading books
- we prosper when people believe in us
- we automatically switch off when faced with solid text .. eg





The prominent education system and accompanying learning material – dictionaries, manuals, and academic book – emphasise one out of several learning styles. Few teaching practices and aids address the complex discord between sound, text, and visual mediums, which are invariably utilized in the teaching and learning process. One pressing issue is resolving the relationship between symbol and meaning, or an internal mental idea and its physical representation on paper, in speech, or through electronic mediums. Several noted philosophers tackled the issue with differing results. Notably, Aristotle hypothesized a reference theory of meaning: general classes referenced words. For example, the spoken or written word ‘horse’ refers to the general class of all horses in the world, thus ‘horse’ means all the horses in the world. John Locke progressed the reference theory suggesting that meaning is associated with mental image (visual or acoustic) or a word. Thus the spoken or written word finds meaning in a mental image: ‘horse’ would call to mind an image of a generic horse. Ludwig Wittgenstein and John Austin departed from the reference and idea theory putting forth the meaning-as-use theory. The two theorists recognised that some words had actual and real references in the world, and many words had associated descriptive and discrete mental ideas. However, they suggested that meaning was found in context with other surrounding words: thus, meaning is discovered in employment or usage: the hired *hand* versus the physical *hand* versus the poker *hand*. The problem of meaning and the internal meaning and external reality relationship continues to be debated and will likely remain unfinished business for some time. Indeed, it is possible that the human species employ several different methods in learning languages.

A problem exists even if we decide which is the most suitable theory for explaining the word and meaning problem. A major issue, and a particular problem for learners of language, is the difference between lexical words and grammatical words. Lexical words are those that convey meaning, while grammatical words are those that bring lexical words in some kind of relationship. Grammatical words are indefinable, quite simply, the words either defy or have no definition (meaning). Matthew Sweet compares the two general classes of words in his famous 1891 New English Grammar: “In a sentence such as “*the earth is round*, we have no difficulty in recognising *earth* and *round* as ultimate independent sense units... such words as *the* and *is*, on the other hand though independent in form, are not independent in meaning: *the* and *is* by themselves do not convey any ideas, as *earth* and *round* do. We call such words as *the* and *is* are form-words, because they are words in form only. When a form-word is entirely devoid of meaning, we may call it an empty word, as opposed to full words such as *earth* and *round*.

[Sweet, 1891]

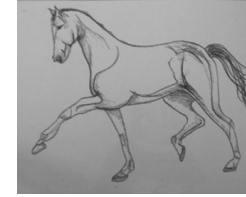
Sweet M. *A New English Grammar: Logical and Historical*,

Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1891.



## When he meant this:

Words can have a generic meaning – horse

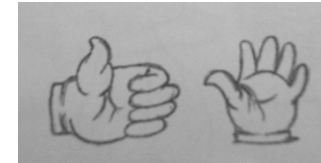


The image of the meaning for the word *hand* depends on how you use it

Hired hand



Physical hand



Poker hand



the  and  is

Some words in Matthew Sweet's view [1891] defy a meaning

# NeuroInclusivity

Did you find this slide presentation different?

Sound thinkers may not have resonated with this style... hopefully image-based thinkers might have found it useful. We dyslexics are the 'apple mac's in an education system designed for 'pc's. There is nothing wrong with our computer and it is possible to facilitate both learning styles!

Different does not have to correlate with disabled. Everyone is ABLE to learn if they are taught in the way they were born to learn.



[www.the wds.org](http://www.the wds.org)

[info@thewds.org](mailto:info@thewds.org)

## **Our Call to Action:**

Please tell as many people as you can that there is a specific gift of dyslexia, a natural ability to alter perception. We are the 'apple mac's in a 'pc' world and there is absolutely nothing wrong with our computer, our brains are working in exactly the way they should be operating.

Different is not disabled. The repercussions are too serious to ignore. It is time to question the system. We have to stop trying to change the learning style of one-third of the population. We cannot afford to squander so much potential.

## **Our Gift to You:**

Please enjoy our documentary, to be released in 2026

**Who Knew: Dyslexia is a Way of Thinking (Film Trailer)**

funded by Telus STORYHIVE

**Thank you...**



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*WHO KNEW Dyslexia is a Way of Thinking* – documentary to be released in 2026