

Differences, not
Disabilities*:
Stepping away from the
Deficit Model

zach edson

zach edson

kenley

triss

LD teacher for 7 years

middle school science



Language Matters





Disability

or

Difference?

great resources:

- Mark Lewis, TEDxRoyalHolloway
- National Center on Disability and Journalism (NCDJ)

“calling someone ‘differently abled’ is euphemistic. It is borderline cutesy and it diminishes the actual experiences of disabled people. It suggests that the term disability should be uncomfortable and therefore should be avoided.”

– Lydia X. Z. Brown,
autistichoya.com

Disability

Difference

“the term we prefer at Wheeler because we believe *differences* are not *deficits*”

The bottom line:

Individuals with learning
disabilities/differences are
capable of immense achievement
in, and out of, school



Use whatever language works best for you and your setting,
but be conscientious of others' choices, too

Language Matters II



People-First Language

“people-first language conveys respect by emphasizing the fact that people with disabilities are first and foremost just that-people.” – EARN.org

People-First Language

instead of...

please say...

dyslexic person --> person with dyslexia



So . . .

- how do we talk about our children's LDs?
- how do we talk about our students' LDs?



Positively!

congratulations!

you have an LD

71%

above avg
communication
skills

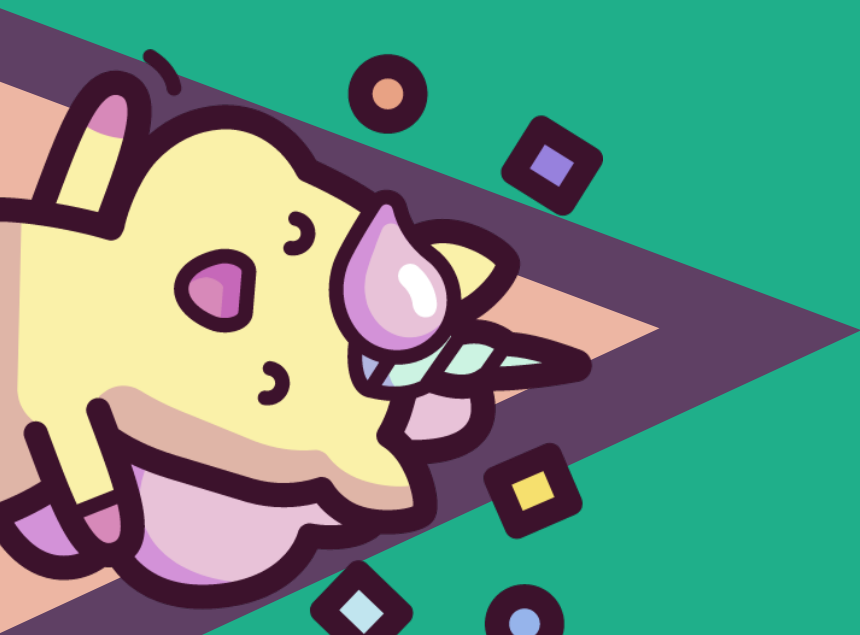
84%

above avg
reasoning
skills

84%

above avg
curiosity
skills

madebydyslexia.org, 2020



Congratulations!
You have an LD!



DYSLEXIC SPERM BANK

MADE BY
DYSLEXIA

FURRIER

MERCER

made
by
dyslexia



Realistically!

Unfortunately, school may be harder for you

91%

teachers are
untrained in
dyslexic strengths

80%

of individuals with
dyslexia graduate
unidentified

madebydyslexia.org, 2019



Labels help

“4 in 5 dyslexics say that knowing they were dyslexic helped them develop the perseverance needed to succeed.”

madebydyslexia.org, 2020

More tips

Praise specifically & sincerely

Find local role models

Encourage them to talk about the challenges/normalize it

Obstacles, not impossibilities

“You have an amazing brain and there are roads for math and the road for decoding... learning to read has a few rocks in the way, and your tutors will help you clear the rocks.”

– Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity

yet

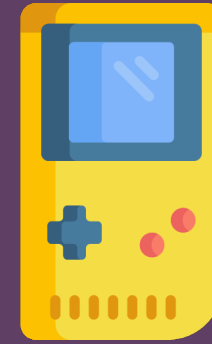
Reframe Obstacles with “Yet”



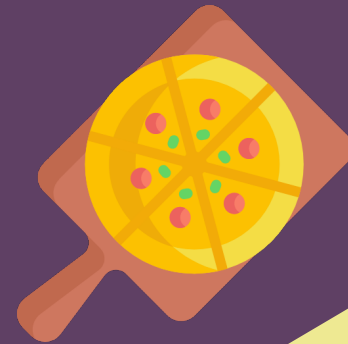
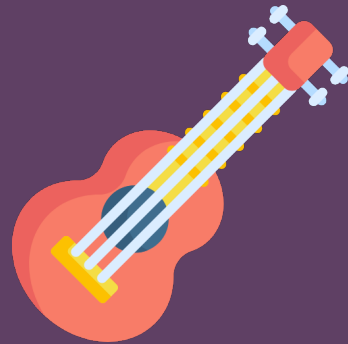
I don't get fractions --> I don't get fractions *yet*.

I stink at reading --> I'm not a great reader *yet*.

I hate school --> I don't like school *yet*.



Help them find success
& build confidence



BROCK L. EIDE, M.D., M.A.
AND FERNETTE F. EIDE, M.D.

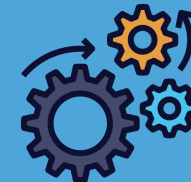
THE DYSLEXIC ADVANTAGE

Unlocking the Hidden Potential
of the Dyslexic Brain

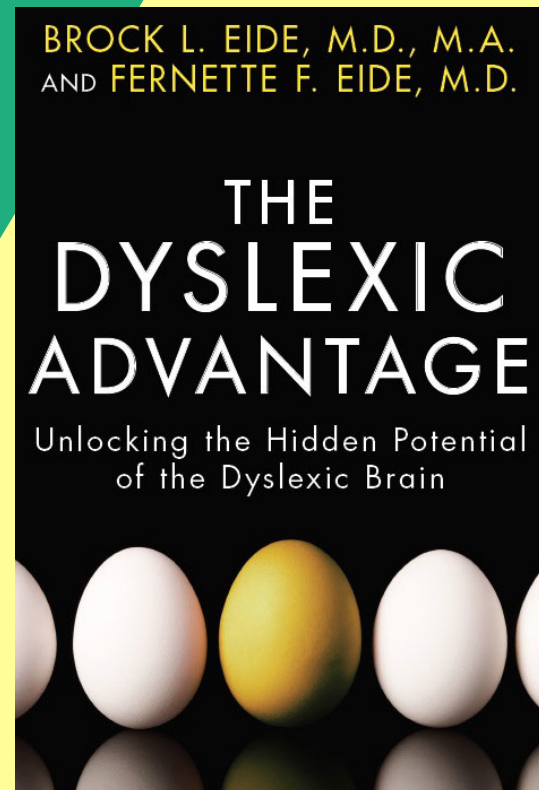


The Dyslexic Advantage

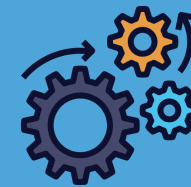
by Drs. Eide & Eide



Dyslexic brains are organized in a way that maximizes strength in **making big picture connections** at the expense of **weaknesses in processing fine details.**



Dr Fernette Eide

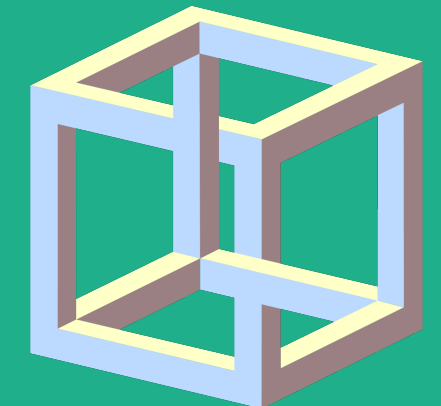


Spatial

quickly understanding graphs

finding weeds in a garden

interpret medical imagery



schneps, et al. 2011

schneps, et al. 2012

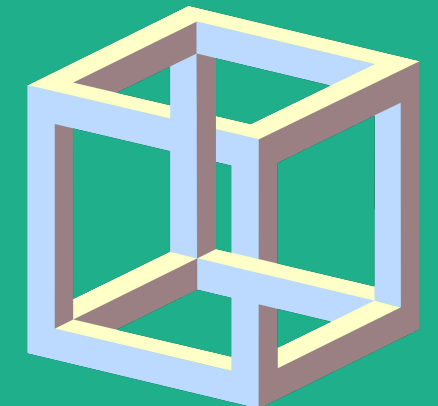


Spatial

They may work in design, 3-D art, architecture, be engineers, builders, inventors, organic chemists or be exceptionally good at bagging your groceries



Dr Brock Eide



At home

Legos

Art

Tools

Modeling clay

Hands on work

Physical & interactive
models

Building, designing, *doing*

At school

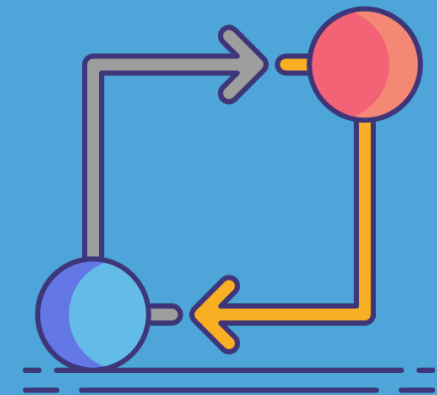
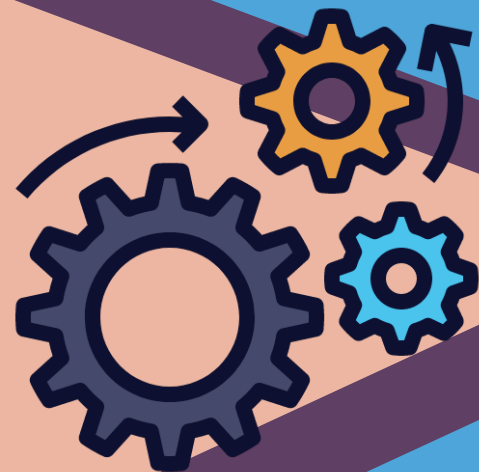
Interconnected Reasoning



See unique patterns

Determine causality

Big picture



Interconnected Reasoning

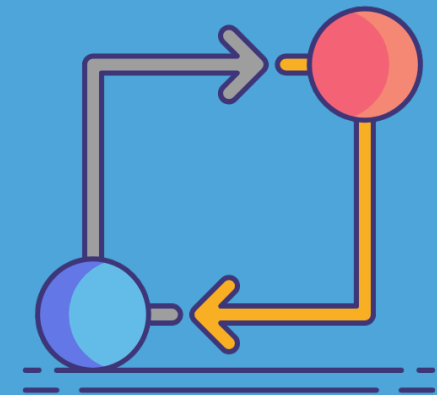
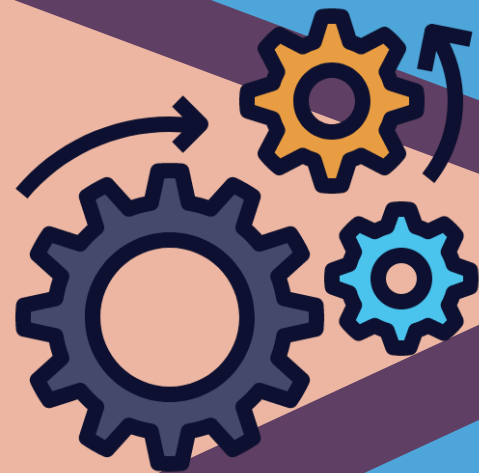


Data analysts

Consultants

Dog trainers

Scientists



At home

Strategy games – Catan, Battleship

Science experiments

Cooking/Baking

Teach inferences,
predictions & pattern making

Alternative assessments

Deprioritize multiple choice

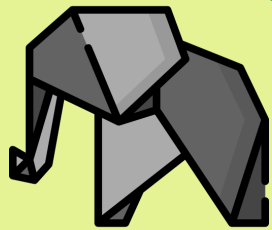
At school

Narrative Reasoning

Episodic Memory

Learn from experience

Understanding
stories/storytelling



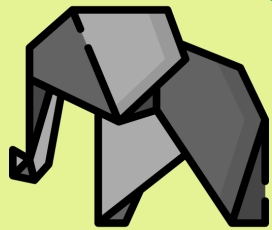
Narrative Reasoning

Counselling

Teaching

Law

Writing



At home

Read – practice inference

YouTube/Podcast

Charades

Improv class

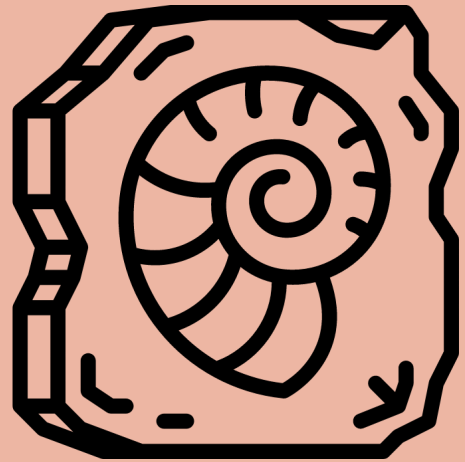
Emphasize & normalize
assistive technologies

Teach story analysis &
creative writing

Different flashcards

At school

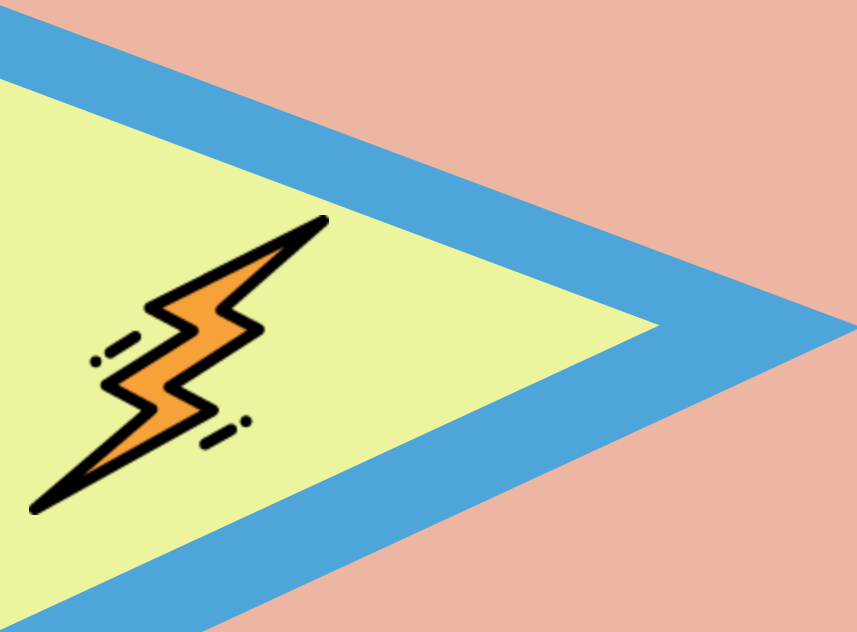
Dynamic Reasoning



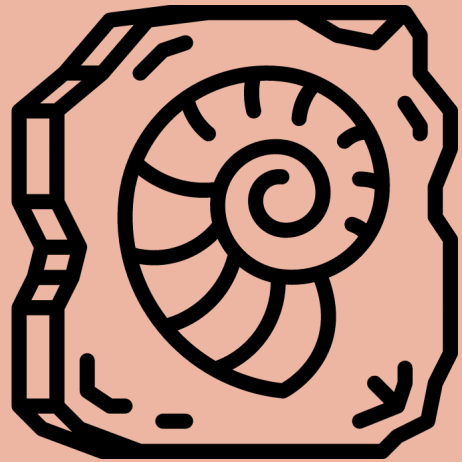
Using incomplete data

Mercurial circumstances

Navigating uncertainty



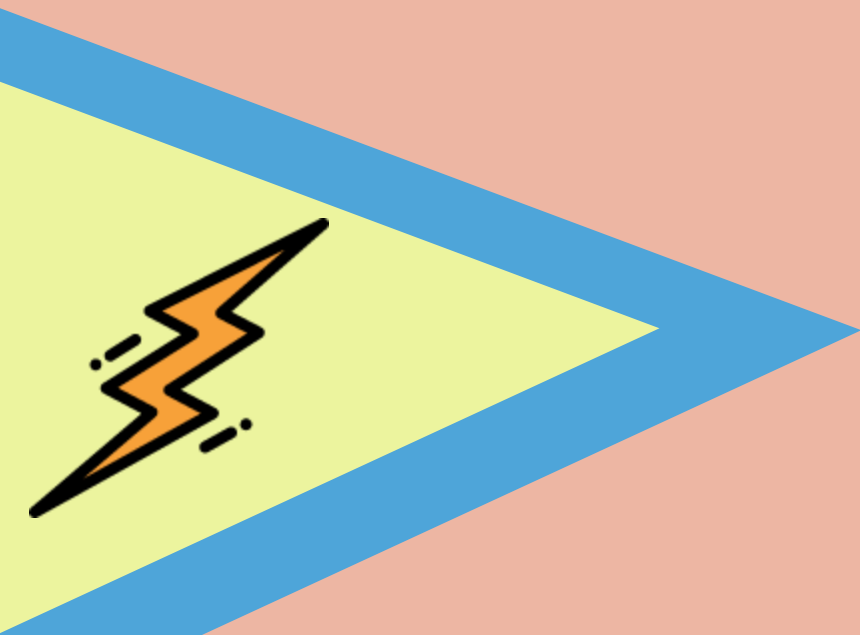
Dynamic Reasoning



Entrepreneurs

Finances

Geology & Paleontology



At home

Puzzles – KenKen, Sudoku

Mysteries

Scavenger hunts

Long term experiments

Investing clubs

Fantasy sports league

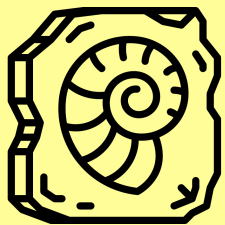
At school

Designers
Engineers
Inventors
Organic chemists

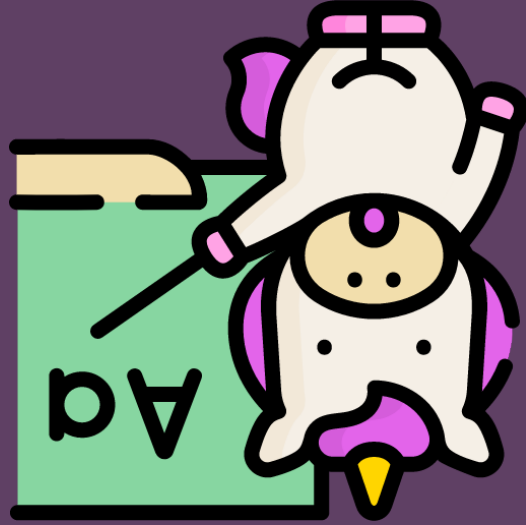
Data analysts
Consultants
Dog trainers
Scientists

Counselling
Teaching
Law
Writing

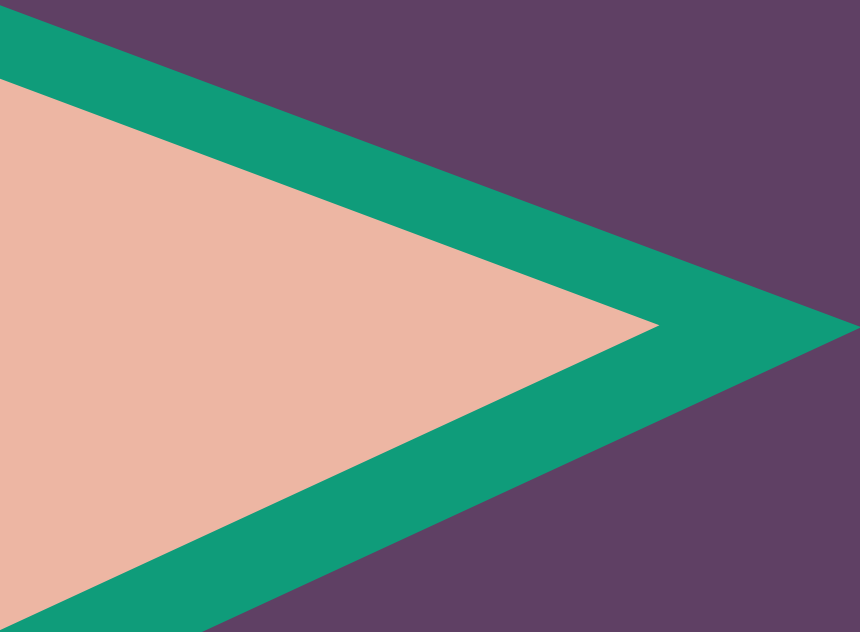
Entrepreneurs
Finances
Geology &
Paleontology

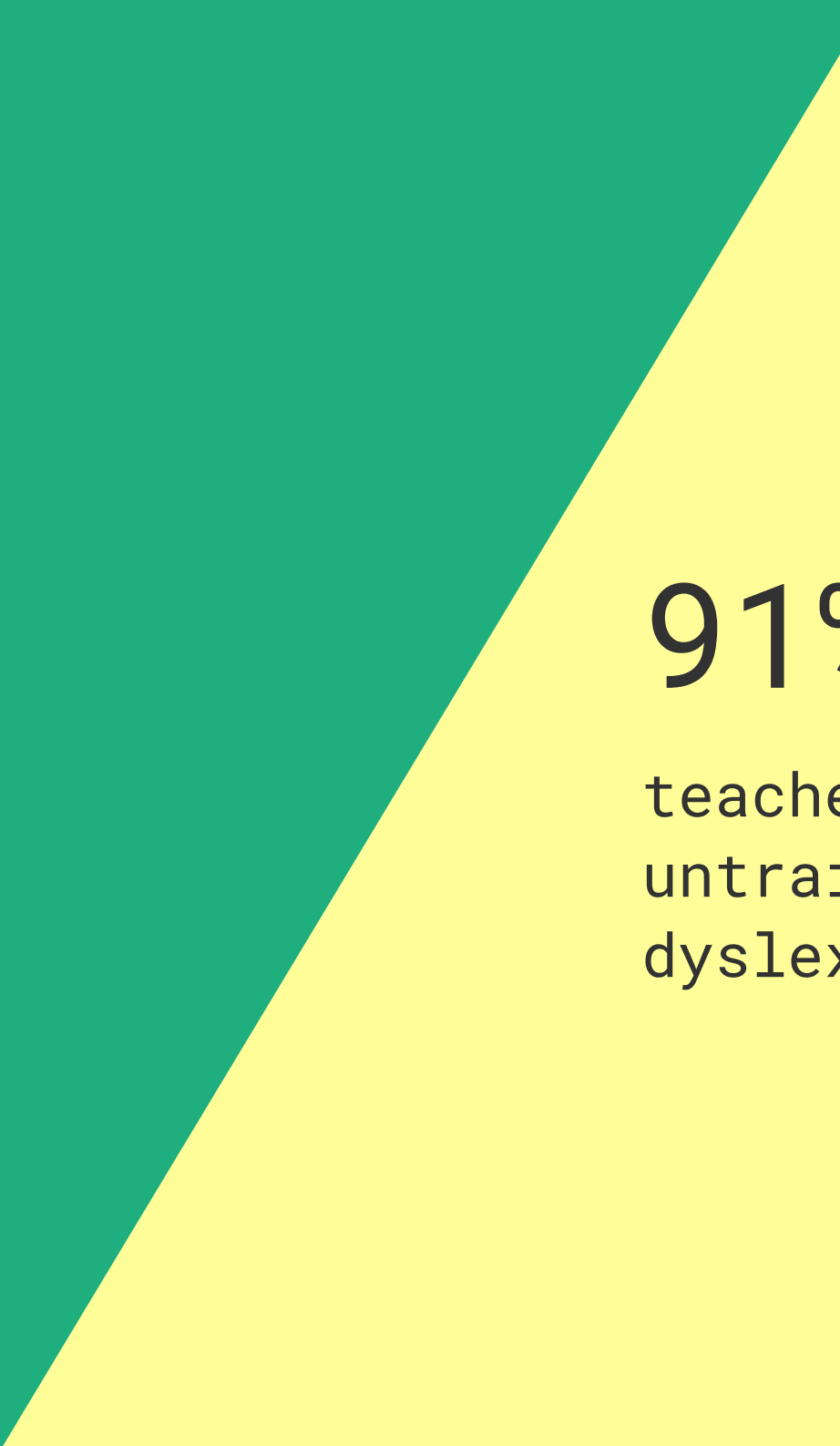


An Incomplete List



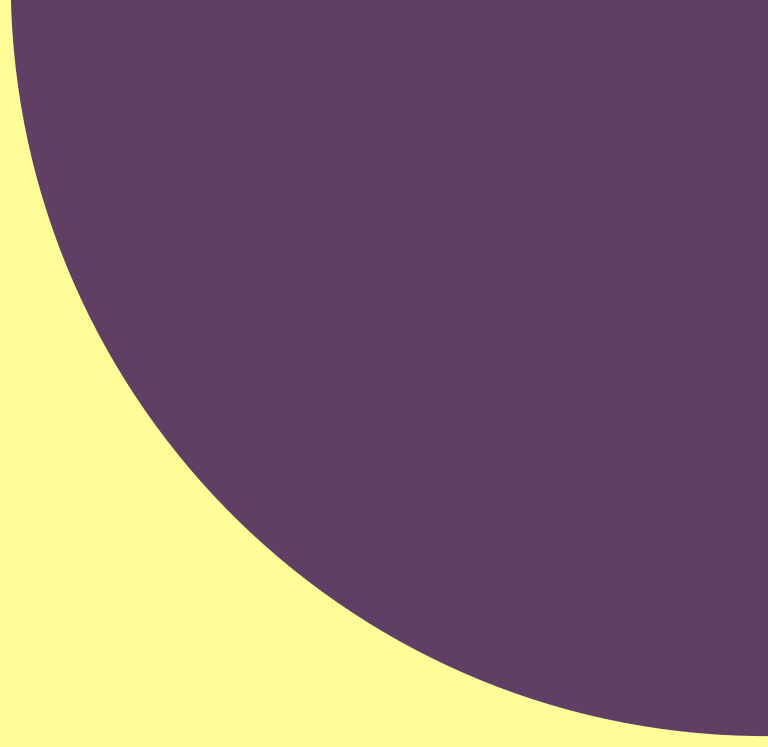
Supporting in School





91%

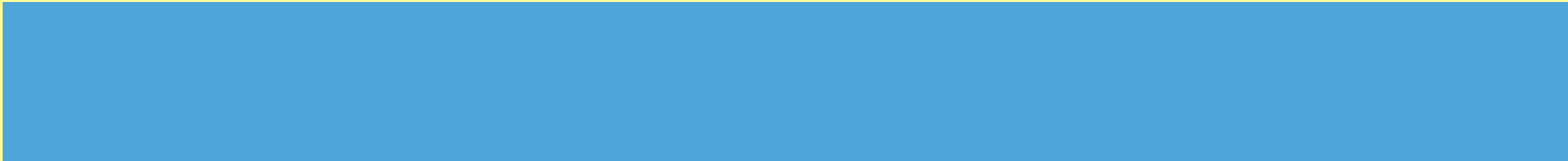
teachers are
untrained in
dyslexic strengths



80%

of individuals with
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madebydyslexia.org, 2019



Reading support

Orton-Gillingham (OG) tutoring

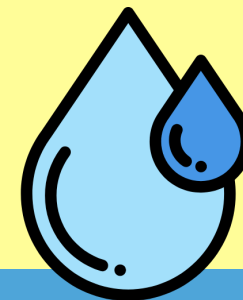
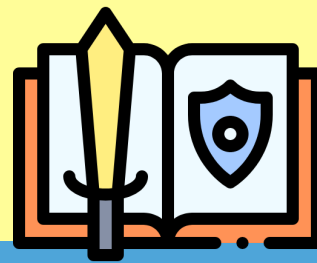
Wilson reading

Assistive technologies

Push for alternative assessments

Deprioritize testing

Authentic, project-based learning



Tutorial support

organization, EF tutoring

“HW helper”

VIRTUAL

Supporting in School

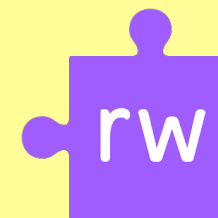


Technologies

Speechify



Google Read & Write



Dedicated “tech” support

Troubleshooting

Tutorial videos

One-on-one availability



Reduce asynchronous learning

direct instruction is foundational
for students with LDs

but keep it bite-sized

Self Care

Breaks every 20 minutes

Netflix/YouTube is not a break

Patience

“Crisis teaching”

Relax – “progress” is not
greatly “lesser”

Connect with friends safely

Change physical location*

In summary . . .

LDs are awesome

Give them space to shine

Give them extra support for their “Not There Yets”

Resources

MadeByDyslexia.org

RItutorial.org

Understood.org

OrtonAcademy.org

DyslexicAdvantage.org

WilsonLanguage.com

NoticeAbility.org

please bother me

Zach Edson

ZachEdson@WheelerSchool.org



TRISS



KENLEY