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## Disability or creative ability: reexamining our misconceptions

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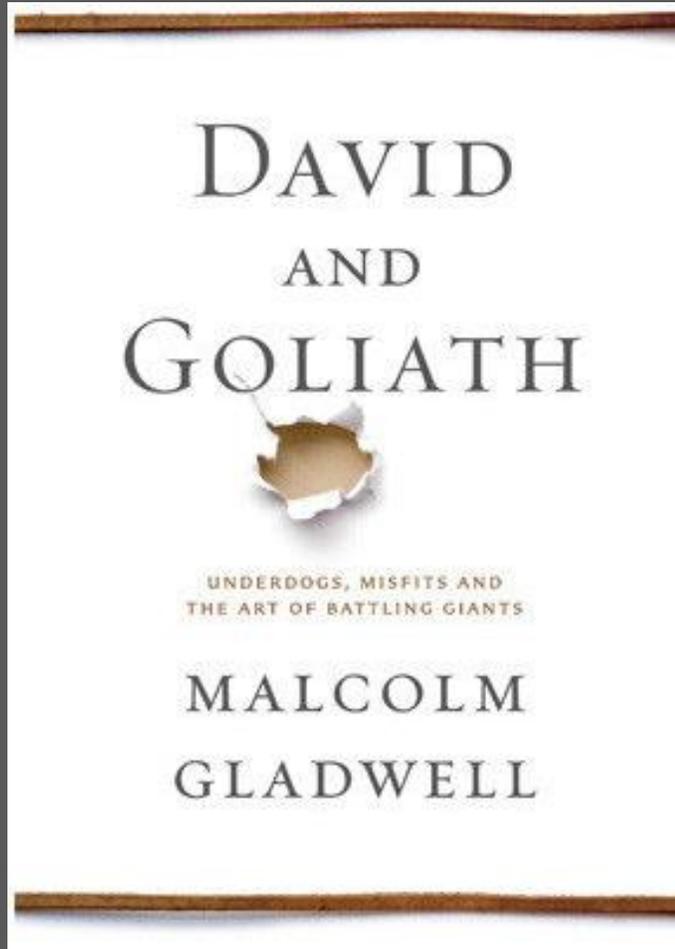
DISABILITY OR CREATIVE ABILITY?  
RE-EXAMINING OUR MISCONCEPTIONS

Patricia Klug



# Ignited Recent Interest in Dyslexic Strengths

- Metaphor and Myth about David and Goliath and the Underdog.
- The Underdog actually has uncelebrated and unseen advantages.
- Applies the story of dyslexia.



# Misconceptions that Leads to Adversity

- It's a reading disorder and effects only reading, writing and spelling.
- Accommodations such as 504 plans and IEP's solves learning issues in the classroom.
- If a dyslexic person gets instruction in reading, they will overcome his or her disability.
- They can **overcome** their disability with extra instruction and accommodations.
- All dyslexics are identified and diagnosed by the time they come to college.
- Elementary schools and High Schools are quick to recognize, diagnose, and deal appropriately with Dyslexia today.
- Dyslexics cannot specialize, major, or work in language orientated fields and disciplines.

# Dyslexic Strengths Correlation and Causation

## Brain Differences

- MRI Scans show activation differences in brain when reading.
- Mini columnar cell structure in cerebellum shows longer distances from one column to another
- Use of right brain hemisphere overall is more activated on scans than left hemisphere
- Visual Perception differences

## Adversity

- US Schools not equipped to handle learning disabilities
- Treat it as disability – put in special education (many times are “gifted”)
- Succumb to myth that it is a reading disorder; focus of accommodations is teaching reading and spelling (Orton Gillingham method).
- Brain doesn't change once it is reading, and major differences remain.
- Very high strengths, very low on weaknesses.

# Learning Disabilities Effects How One Views the World and Oneself in the World

“I was completely outclassed and left out at the beginning of the race.”

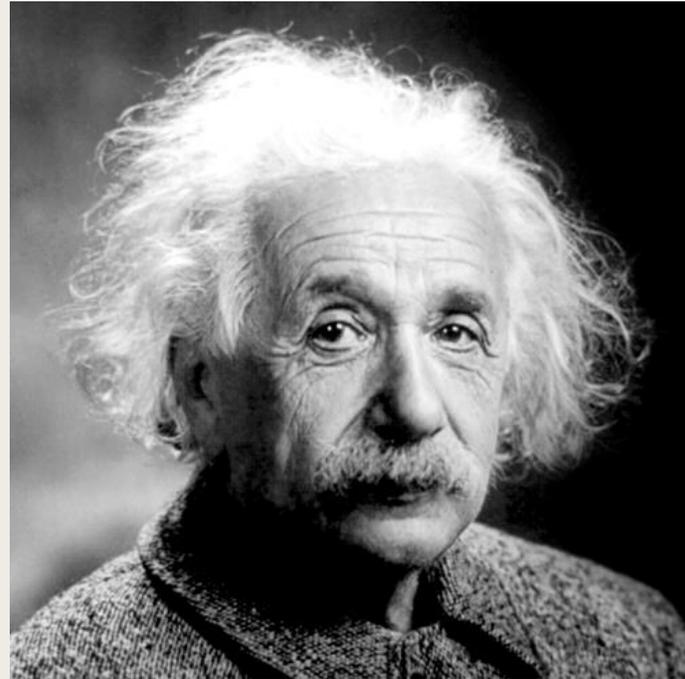
Winston Churchill



## How Do We Determine Intelligence?

“Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid.”

Albert Einstein



# Jonathan Buchanan – Ted Talk



## Dyslexics Can Persevere In Spite of Their Challenges

- "Never give up hope. When someone helping you gets frustrated, don't let them. Take a step back, because you can't learn anything under pressure. And don't worry about the label!"
- Erin Bronkovich



# Classroom and Real World Struggles

- Handwriting
- Spelling
- Pronunciation
- Reading
- Sequential directions
- Details forgotten
- Working memory

# Approaches to Being Dyslexic in the World

## Accept It

Accommodations

Technology

## Change It

Universal Design

Learning Styles

## Leave It

Withdraw

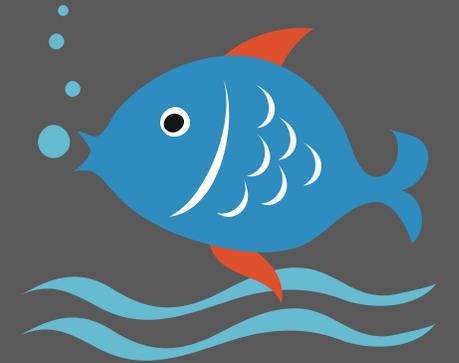
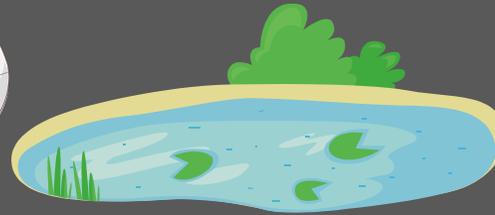
Homeschool

Dyslexia advocacy can encompass one, more than one, or all of these approaches.

# Finding the Right Accommodations

- Extra Time on Tests
- Notes available – (Power Points, lecture notes, taking picture of the board).
- Option for taking exam orally (this can't be enforced only offered voluntarily by Professor)
- Sitting at the front of the room
- Technology
  - Speech to Text
  - Kurzweil for Reading
  - Recording devices for taking notes
  - Ginger software program for spelling

# A Fish Running the Race



# Advocates

Ben Foss – University of Michigan Dyslexic Help Center, “The Dyslexic Empowerment Plan.”

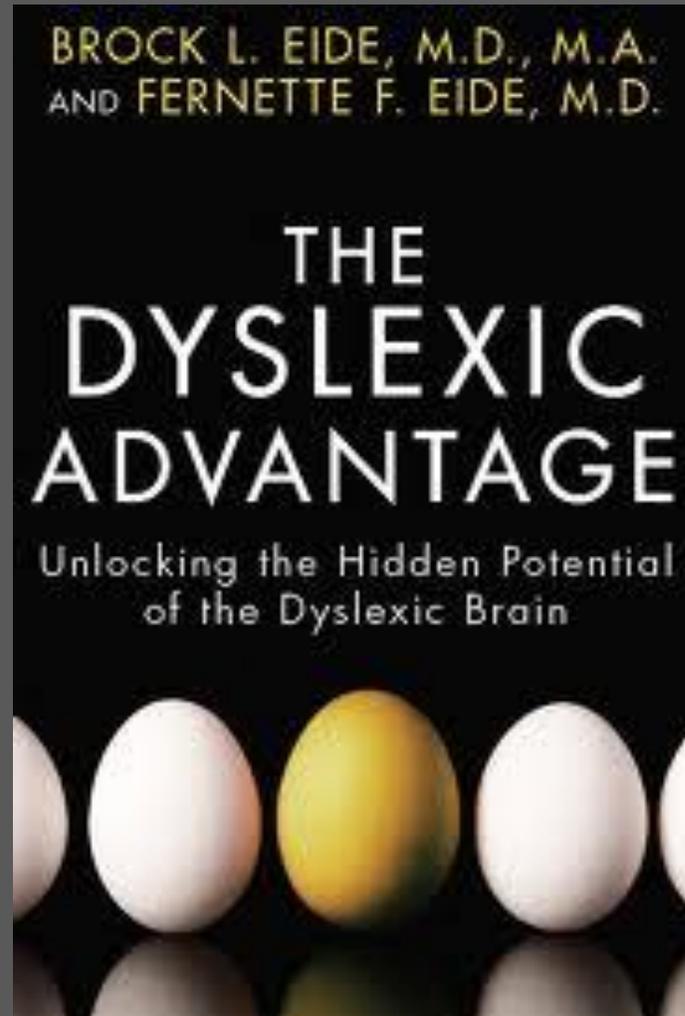
Jonathan Mooney – Mentor Program “Project Eye to Eye.” “The Short Bus” Documentary, “Learning Outside the Lines.”



# Scott Sonnen – TED TALK



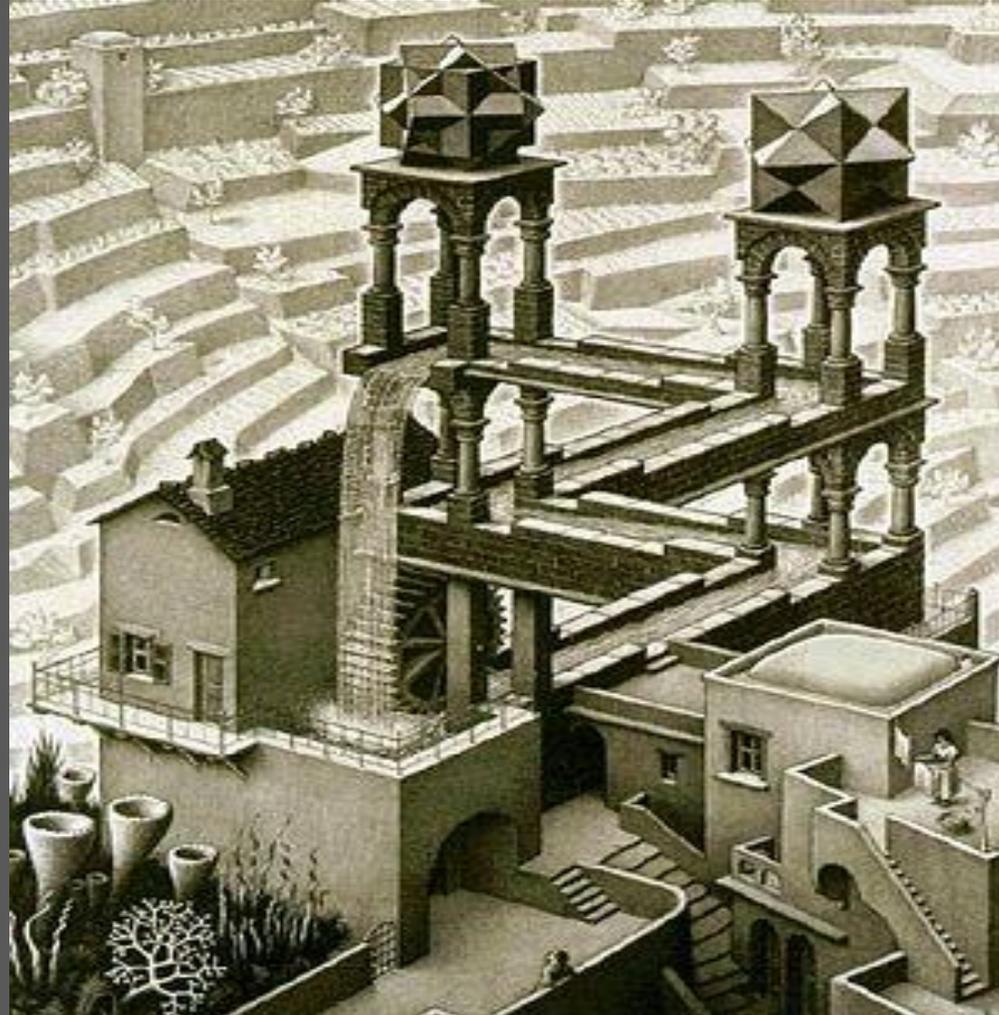
# So What about Differences in Learning, Creativity, and Dyslexic Success?



# MIND Strengths of Dyslexics

- **M**      **Material Reasoning =**
  - Visual/Spatial
- **I**      **Interconnectedness Reasoning**
  - Connections in reading, context, word associations
- **N**      **Narrative Reasoning**
  - Episodic memory (clarity and vividness)
- **D**      **Dynamic Reasoning**
  - Ability to imagine, predict processes and patterns

# M.C. Escher's Waterfall and Dr. Matthew Schneps



# Visual Perception Findings

- Dr. Catya von Károlyi – University of Wisconsin, Madison. Study showed dyslexics figured out the impossibility of this picture 1/3 times faster than non-dyslexics.
- Dr. Matthew Schneps, findings published in Bulletin of Astronomical Study in 2011 found that Dyslexics often outperformed non-dyslexic peers in detecting characteristics of black holes.
- Dr. James Howard discovered in 2006 that dyslexics could detect the letter “T” better in a sea of “L’s”



Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics: Dr. Matthew H. Schneps,  
Director of the Lab for Visual Learning  
Studies the consequences of cognitive diversity on learning.



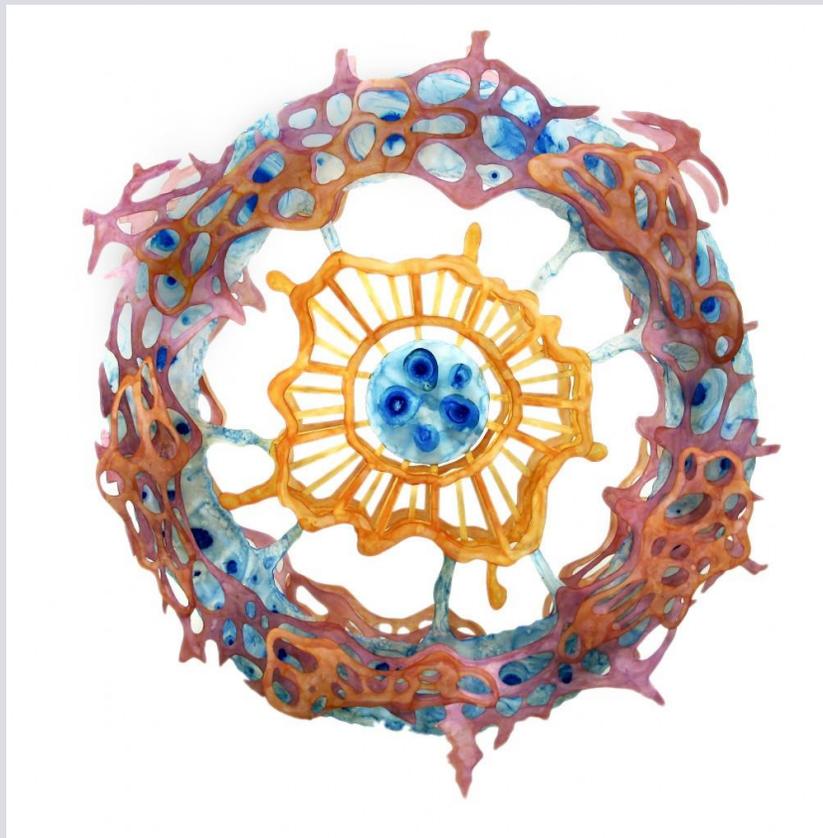
# Thomas West: The Unwrapped Gift of Dyslexia



“Portrait of a dyslexic artist, who transforms neurons into ‘butterflies’(Rolfes).

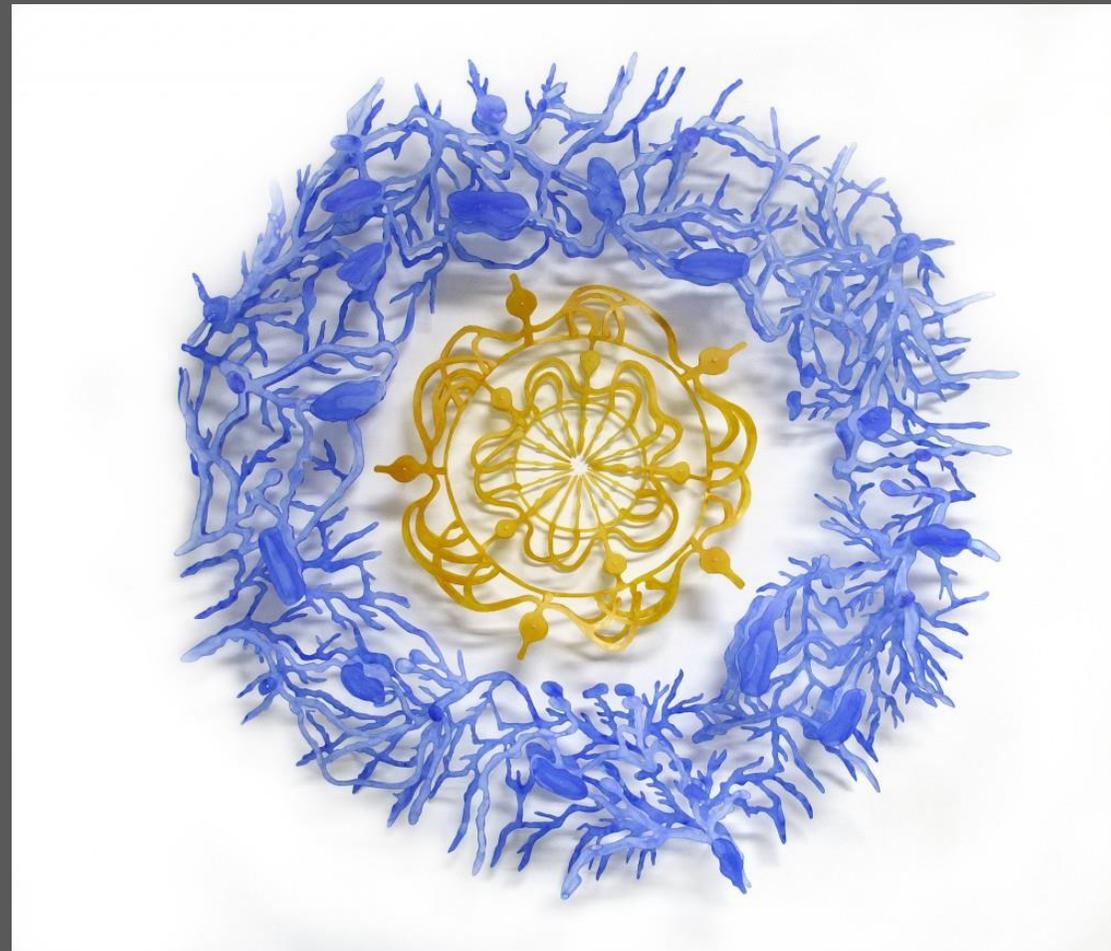


Artist, Rebecca Kamen's artwork on brain inspired by her dyslexia.



## Rebecca Kamen's *Illumination*

Kamen says, "People with dyslexia understand things in relationship to other things, "which in retrospect, is such an incredible gift" (Rolfes)



# Ways to Access and Demonstrate Knowledge

- Illustrate your understanding – Cartoon, drawing, diagrams
- Act out a play showing your understanding
- Create a PowerPoint and deliver an oral presentation about the topic
- Make a video
- Write a poem about the concept
- Find patterns in events, dates, facts, concepts, ideas.
- Build a model or sculpture
- Deconstruct a problem, a reading, a concept.

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