



**Writing Strategies for the
Reluctant Writer, including
Dysgraphia**
 Regina G. Richards, MA, BCET
 Educational Therapist
 Riverside California
Regina.Richards@dyslexia-ca.org



We want to hear from you!

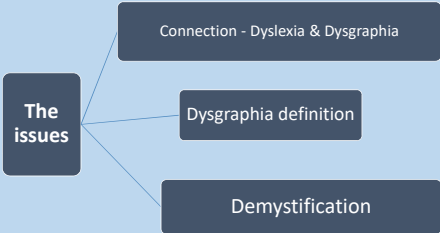
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Overview

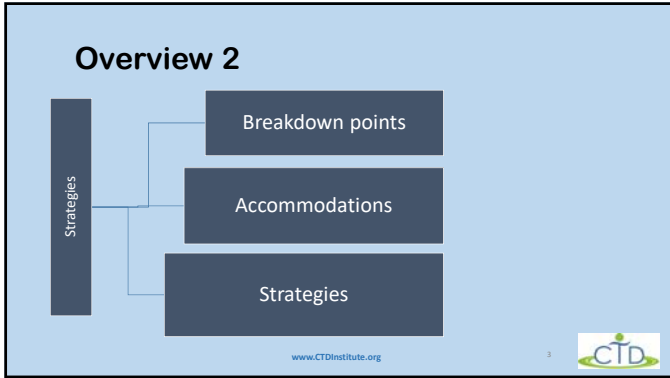


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    graph LR
      A[The issues] --- B[Connection - Dyslexia & Dysgraphia]
      A --- C[Dysgraphia definition]
      A --- D[Demystification]
  
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Biological roots & disruptions

- Prenatal cascade of events
- Disruption in areas of brain when carrying out phonological tasks
- Energy usage – at least 4 times as much

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The connection between dyslexia & dysgraphia

Dyslexia and dysgraphia are *cousins*
 Both are language-based
 Both have root in sequencing

Primarily:

- Dyslexia affects reading and spelling
- Dysgraphia affects spelling and writing

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Similarities

- Automaticity
- Visual recognition
- Similar strategies
- Similar compensations

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Fluency

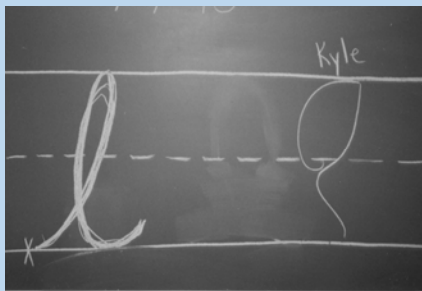
- Dyslexia – Fluency = a critical aspect related to reading comprehension
- Also critical for dysgraphic students
- Affected by the fluency of motor movements

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Kyle age 8



Definition of Dysgraphia

- Greek Origin
 - Condition of having impaired graph (i.e., letter) production
- Is a SLD
- Developmental motor coordination can be rule out
- Have unusual difficulty with subword letter formation

Berninger & Wolf, *Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, OWL LD, & Dyscalculia*, page 21
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Definition 2

- A written language disorder
 - In serial production of strokes
 - To form a handwritten letter
- Involves not only motor skills but also language skills
 - Finding, retrieving, and producing letters
 - This is a subword level language skills
- The impaired handwriting may interfere with spelling and/or composing

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One size fits all???

Once upon a time the animals decided they must do something heroic to meet the problems of a "new world,"

so they organized a school.

They adopted an activity curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming, and flying,

and to make it easier to administer, all the animals took all the subjects.

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One size fits all???

The duck was excellent in swimming, better in fact than his instructor, and made passing grades in flying, but he was very poor in running.

Since he was so slow in running, he had to stay after school and also drop swimming to practice running.

This was kept up until his web feet were badly worn and he was only average in swimming.

But average was acceptable in school, so nobody worried about that except the duck.

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One size fits all???

The rabbit ...

The squirrel ...

The eagle ...



At the end of the year, an abnormal eel that could swim exceedingly well, and also run, climb, and fly a little had the highest average and was valedictorian.

From *Chicken Soup For the Soul*

How many of us are like the duck who is excellent in swimming and good at flying, but we spend a lifetime running only to wear out our feet and in so doing we neglect our **true gifts**?

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The awesome juggling act

Mel Levine,
Keeping A Head in School
Page 171



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Fine motor problems affecting writing

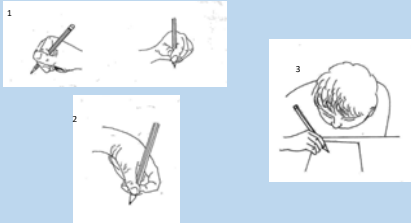


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Pencil grip can affect writing



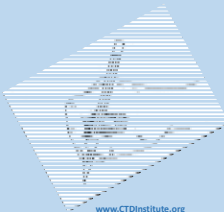
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An appropriate pencil grip

- The normal tripod pencil grip ---



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Demystification

- Take out the mystery for the child
 - “Writing is hard because you struggle to hold a pencil correctly. That’s why you also need to learn to type”
 - Writing is hard because you have trouble remembering the words you want while you also working on the sentences. That’s why.....”
- You explain what is hard and that give a cue as to how you’ll work on it – in a positive way

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Some characteristics of dysgraphia

- Substantial effort
- Interferes with ability to convert ideas
- Inefficient prerequisite skills
 - For letter form
 - And use of space
- Causes great energy drain
 - Interferes with higher level performances of expression

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The overall issue

- Difficulty automatically remembering and mastering
 - The sequence of muscle motor movements for writing letters or numbers
- It is out of harmony
 - With the person’s intelligence
 - With regular teaching
 - With use of the pencil in non-learning tasks

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Specific symptoms

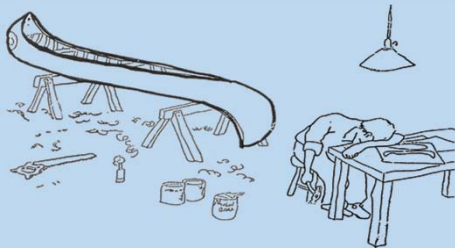
- Processing
- Fatigue
- Communication
- Organization
- Inattentiveness

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Inattentiveness to details in writing

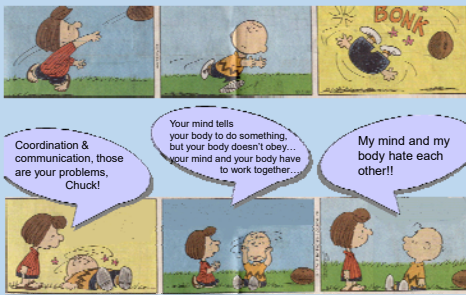


OH GEEZI

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Communication



Myths about dysgraphia & other writing issues

- Laziness
- Not trying
- Not caring
- Sloppy writing
- General sloppiness
- Careless writing
- Visual-motor delay

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Specific observations

- Letter inconsistencies & irregularities
- Unfinished letters
- Struggles
- Cramped fingers
- Odd positions
- Inconsistencies
- General illegibility
- Heavy reliance on visual



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More specific observations

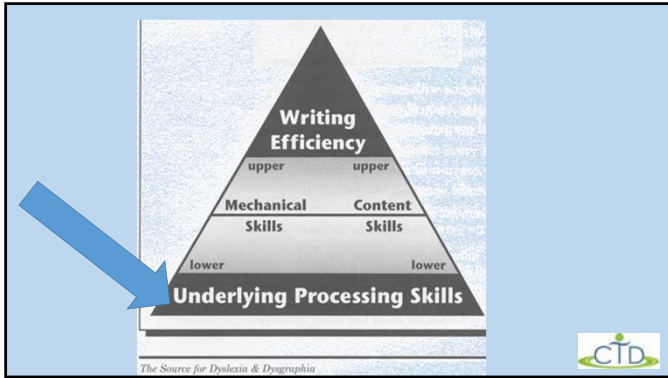
- Inefficient speed in copying
- Decreased speed of writing
 - Excessive speed when writing
- Inattentiveness about details
 - when writing
- Slow implementation of verbal directions
 - sequencing and planning
- Concurrent sequencing issues

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General strategies for remediation

- Focus on automatization
- Scaffolding
- Modeling
- Separation of breakdown points
- Staging
- Multiple formats
- Deploying strengths
- Use strategies
- Directed retraining

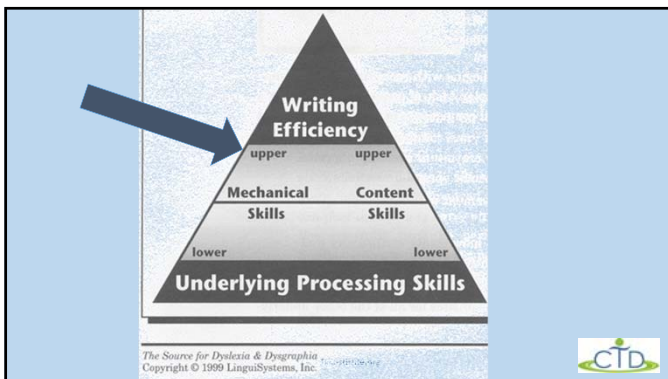
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Underlying processing skills

- Physical components of writing
- Motor performance
 - Speed
 - Efficiency
 - Automaticity
- Active working memory
- Language formulation and ideation
- Awareness of metacognitive strategies

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Mechanical skills -- lower level

- Use of pencil as a tool
- Consistent use of form and space when writing letters
- Automatic letter form
- Punctuation
- Capitalization
- Spelling

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To help with spelling – provide PATTERN RECOGNITION

- Not rule memorization
- Facilitates learning
 - Phonological
 - Orthographic (eidetics)
 - Morphological (word parts & meaning)
- Active, constructive exploration
 - Novelty
 - Active & strategic response

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Electronic spell checker

Eye halve a spelling chequer It came with
 my pea sea It plainly marques four my
 revue Miss steaks eye kin knot sea.

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Benefits of a spell checker that provides auditory reinforcement

- Reinforces phonetic analysis
- Helps connect phonetics to eidetics
- Provides auditory reinforcement
- Compensates for sequencing problems in dictionary work
- **Examples**
 - Franklin Speller
 - App – *Easy Spelling Aid*

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Mechanical skills -- upper level

- Automaticity of lower level skills
- Integration of lower level skills with content
- Grammar
- Semantics
- Speed
 - motor, general processing of information
- Clarity, precision, confidence

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Visual Thesaurus



<https://www.visualthesaurus.com>

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Content skills - lower level

- Formulating ideas
- Organizing ideas
- Representing ideas with clarity and in sequence

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Organizational strategies

- Visual organizers
 - Using an organizer such as Inspiration is extremely useful because it allow you to add an auditory component
- Definition of visual organizer
 - A visual display that demonstrates relationships between facts, concepts or ideas. It can guide the learner’s thinking as they fill in and build upon a visual map or diagram
 - It helps student organize complex information into concise visual maps
- Why do they work?

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Inspiration (or Kidspiration)

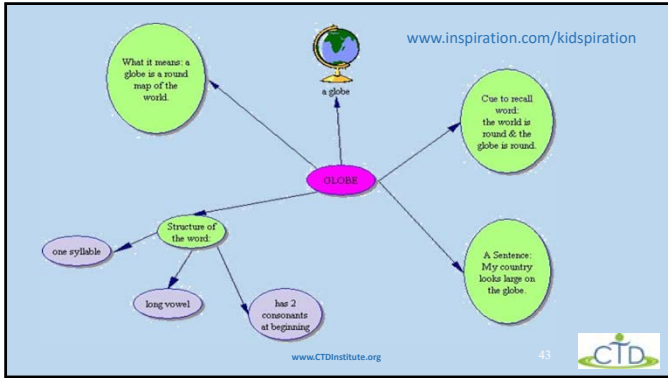
- Students have a symbol library where they can select a variety of pictures to represent words to use
- Or, they can type in the words
- They build an organizer – a mind map

www.inspiration.com

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Which critter is which?

1 Look at the different kinds of animals in the Symbol Library.

2 Find as many examples of each kind as you can. Go to Writing view to tell what makes these groups special.

insect	bird	mammal	reptile

Template from Kidspiration CTD logo

1 Look at these words from *The Story of Babar*.

2 Drag each part of speech to the correct SuperGroper box.

Things or people or places
Things or people or places

Actions
Actions

Description words
Description words

Made with Kidspiration

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category

linguistic structure

antonym

synonym

to make easier

facilitate

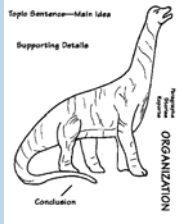
Reference Source for Learning Memory, p.33

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Flower Writing

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Another organizer graphic



The Source for Dyslexia & Dysgraphia, page 241

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Another organizer



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Self-feedback

- Another – and perhaps one of the most valuable strategies of all
- Give child the goal criteria and have the child check his/her own writing to look for these
- KISS

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Primary organizer

- Did I use correct:
 - spacing?
 - capitalization?
 - punctuation?
 - spelling?
- Do I have my name, date and title?
- Did I write neatly?
- Do my sentences make sense?
- Did I stick to the topic?



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Another option for self-feedback

Did I use correct:

- capitalization?
- punctuation?
- spelling?
- Did I write neatly?
- Do my subject & verb agree?

✓ I made _____ changes/corrections!

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Content skills -- upper level

- Writing using different writing styles
- Being flexible in the writing process
- Understanding the viewpoint of the reader
- Using writing as a vehicle through which thoughts are discovered and developed
- Using writing as a personal search for meaning in a reflective way
- Writing with enthusiasm
- One strategy ---
 - Plan, Write, Review, Revise

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Bridge words - Transition words & phrases connect thoughts and ideas

- This is one of the *many* critical elements students must be familiar with
 - Numbers & synonyms for numbers
 - Words expressing time
 - "And" and its synonyms
 - "But" and its synonyms
 - Degrees of certainty
 - Consequences or results

Must be taught explicitly

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Help students add complexity to a thought

- Give students a root clause and have them complete the sentence with a new clause following each conjunction:
 - Fractions are like decimals because *they are all parts of wholes.*
 - Fractions are like decimals, but *they are written differently.*
 - Fractions are like decimals, so *they can be used interchangeably.*

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What about persistent problems?

- COMPENSATE
and
- BYPASS
- When to use?

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Bypass -- go around the problem

- Understanding
- Allow either print or cursive
- Spell checker, computer, voice activated
- Extra time
- Alternative forms of testing
- Adjust assignments

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Compensation strategies

- Keyboarding
- Spelling on 1st draft
- Proof after a delay
- Staging
- Provide for breaks

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Perhaps the biggest problem with writing issues

Self-esteem

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Example: *Eli: The Boy Who Hated to Write*

- Pages 36 and 37



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Critical aspects

- Ask,
 - Where does the performance break down?
- Remember the 3 Ps
 - Prioritization
 - Positives
 - Patience

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Take-away thoughts

- Anyone can be reluctant to write – but especially if they have a dysgraphic pattern
 - Many reasons
 - Generally has nothing to do with being lazy, intelligence or motivation
- **Strategies HELP!** These must be taught explicitly.
- Remember to ask yourself, “where does the performance break down?”
- Be aware of where the child is!
- Encourage self-monitoring/feedback
- Remember the 3 Ps

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Resources

- Visual thesaurus demo
- <http://www.visualthesaurus.com/>

Other options

- To obtain an interactive concept map that you can customize and share
 - <http://www.instagramok.com/>
- To create visual supports for children
 - <http://connectability.ca/visuals-engine/>
- For a free technology toolkit for UDL in all classrooms
 - <http://udltechtoolkit.wikispaces.com/>

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Tech References

- **Co-Writer Universal for Google Chrome** – uses grammar, vocabulary-smart word prediction, topic dictionaries, and built-in speech recognition to help students better express their ideas in writing across devices. <http://donjohnston.com/cowriter>.
- **Draft Builder** – breaks down the writing process into three manageable steps: outlining, note-taking and writing the first draft. <http://donjohnston.com/draftbuilder/>.
- **Easy Spelling Aid** – simply touch the microphone button, say the word or phrase, and receive the correct spelling. <http://www.easyspellingaid.com/>.
- **Evernote** – organize your work – task management. <https://evernote.com>.

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Tech References 2

- **Inspiration (or Kidspiration)** – students can create a mind map (or other visual learning tool) of what they want to include in their paper and the program helps them convert it to sentence or paragraph format. www.inspiration.com.
- **Microsoft Lens** is an iOS app (also available on Android) which takes a photo of text and reads it aloud for the user. The app now has an "immersive reading" mode which enable text-to-speech, font and line spacing adjustments <https://youtu.be/jz3WVhgISw> and <https://support.office.com/en-us/article/What-is-Office-Lens-f5f6b88d-356f-4037-b738-49f34be86db3>.
- **Notability** – Powerful and simple note-taking. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wV7-eMGIF0s>

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Tech References 3

- **Snap & Read Universal** – works across Google Drive, email, websites, Kindle Cloud Reader, and PDFs to read text aloud, translate over 100 languages, create outlines and bibliographies, as well as transform difficult text into more simple text. <http://donjohnston.com/snap-read>.
- **ThinkMap Visual Thesaurus** – users can look a up word and it is presented in a visual format, with color cues as to its importance. <https://www.visualthesaurus.com/>.
- **UDITechToolKit** – contains a large list of various computer resources for graphic organizers, literacy tools, study skills tools, research tools, math tools, writing tools, text-to-speech and speech-to-text, and storytelling tools. <https://uditechtoolkit.wikispaces.com/>.
- **Write: Outloud** – simple to use & reads words as they are written, providing real-time auditory feedback. Tools include talking spell checker, homophone checker, and dictionary. <http://donjohnston.com/writeoutloud/>. Has a good 5-minute demo video.

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References

- **Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, OWL LD, and Dyscalculia: Lessons from Science & Teaching.** Virginia W. Berninger & Beverly Wolf
- **Helping Students with Dyslexia & Dysgraphia Make Connections.** Virginia W. Berninger & Beverly Wolf
- **The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan: A Blueprint for Renewing Your Child's Confidence and Love of Learning.** Benn Foss

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References continued

- **Eli: The Boy Who Hated to Write.** Regina G. Richards & Eli I. Richards
- **The Writing Road: Reinvigorate Your Students' Enthusiasm for Writing.** Regina G. Richards, www.LDonline.org
- **The Source for Dyslexia & Dysgraphia.** Regina G. Richards
- **The Source for Learning & Memory Strategies.** Regina G. Richards
- **When Writing's a Problem: Understanding Dysgraphia & Helpful Hints for Reluctant Writers.** Regina G. Richards (Kindle edition)

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Thank you for being here today.

Hope you've enjoyed the learning !




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Bio -- Regina G. Richards, MA

A Director and President of Richards Educational Therapy Center, Inc. and RET Center Press, Regina founded and was Director of Big Springs School (Riverside) for 27 years. Her professional emphasis has been in developing and providing multidisciplinary programs for language learning disabilities, especially dyslexia and dysgraphia.


A practicing educational therapist in Riverside since 1975, Regina has authored many journal articles and books. She is an active member of her local So CA Tri-Counties Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, and served as its president for 8 years. She teaches at the Univ. of California Extension at the Riverside and presents at numerous conferences nationally.

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