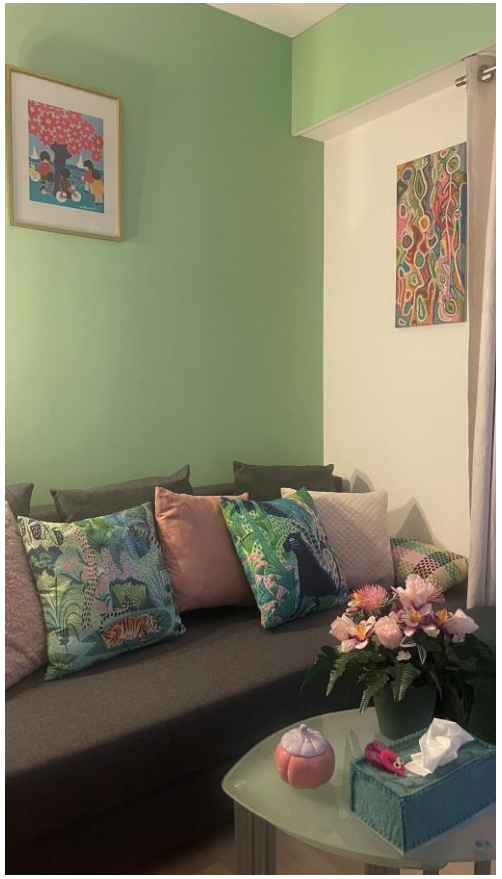

Getting Assessed for Dyslexia:

Understanding the Dyslexia Diagnostic Process

SENat Learning Support Services

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Who Am I?

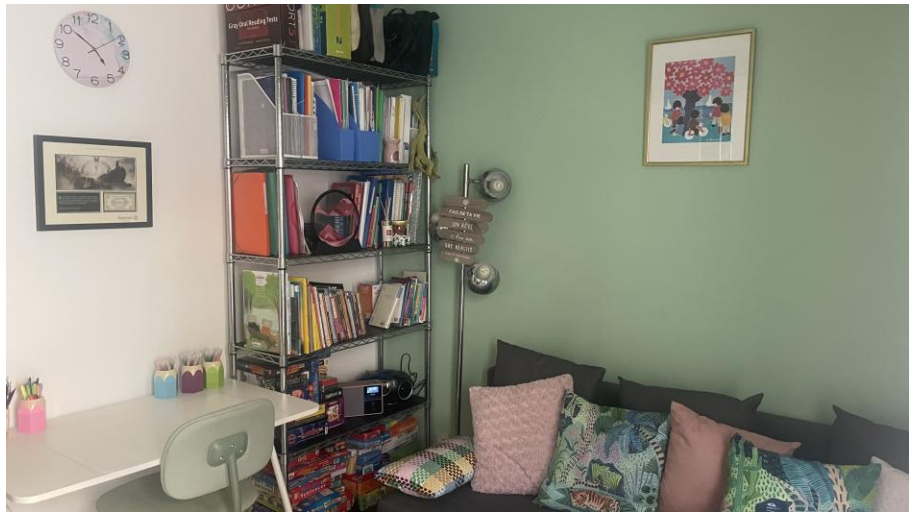
Over 30 years' experience; first as a teacher of French in London and the last 20 years at the International School of Nice (ISN) as Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) and Head of Inclusion.

A Nest for Learning

SENat Learning Support Services

Services: Specialist Teacher & Consultant - Dyslexia, Dyspraxia, ADHD, High Potential

- Learning Specialist teacher trained in Dyslexia, ADHD, Dyspraxia (fine motor skills), High Potential (Gifted & Talented), cognitive difficulties (concentration, memory and sequencing), study skills and executive functioning
- Dyslexia Specialist and exam access arrangements assessor
- Qualified French teacher, EAL teacher and Mental Health First Aider
- Consultant for inclusive practices in education for parents and teachers



Qualifications

- *Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Studies in Education* (AMBDA Accredited) SpLD *Dyslexia*
- *Postgraduate Diploma in Special Educational Needs & Disabilities*
- *National Award for SEN Coordination* (NASCO)
- *Certificate of Competence in Educational Testing* (CCET) and *Educational Testing: Application & Reflection*
- *Certificate of Psychometric Testing, Assessment & Access Arrangements* (CPT3A)
- *Level 5 Award in Learning Support for Adults with Dyslexia*
- *Youth Mental Health First Aider*
- *Adult Mental Health First Aider*
- *RSA TEFLA Preparatory Certificate*
- *PGCE-Modern Languages-French*
- *BA (Hons) Modern Arts-French*

Why Get Assessed?

- To measure your current strengths and difficulties
- To understand how you learn best- self-awareness
- To find a reason for your literacy difficulties and weak memory, organisational skills, time management
- To reassure you that there is support available and that you are not alone
- A way of moving forward and embracing your unique strengths, reassurance that you are not 'stupid'; your brain has a different way of processing and viewing things
- To discover strategies to support you in your daily life (workplace, higher education, daily routine)
- If in education, to be aware of accommodations you may be eligible for in reading/writing and in exams
- If in work, to be aware of workplace accommodations which your employer will need to put in place
- To give you independence and make you fully equipped to know what to ask for in terms of accommodations and support = METACOGNITIVE skills

Where To Get Assessed

An assessor who is a *Dyslexia specialist* familiar with *workplace consultancy*.

No Financial Support

- Unfortunately, there is no direct funding for diagnostic assessments in schools, colleges or other settings. Assessments must be paid for by the person or employer. As dyslexia and dyscalculia are not medical conditions, a diagnostic assessment is not covered by the NHS. You can try to apply for a bursary from the British Dyslexia Association.
- **BDA**
- Other Dyslexia associations which include lists of Dyslexia specialists: **Dyslexia Action Guild, PATOSS, the Dyscalculia Network, Dyslexia Sparks**
- Educational & clinical psychologists: list of assessors available on the **British Psychological Society** website

Screening Test or Full Diagnostic Assessment?

- Screening tests can be done online, some are free
- Screening tests don't give you a full diagnosis of Dyslexia
- Sometimes the results may be negative, but the reason could be that you have compensated for your difficulties and have found strategies to mask them
- A full diagnostic assessment uses standard scores (based on normative samples) and are more accurate in their diagnosis
- A full diagnostic assessment is recognised by examining bodies and other professionals as an official diagnosis of Dyslexia
- A full diagnostic assessment will give you a complete written report with further recommendations for support

The Assessment Process

The assessor will ask you questions about:

- ✓ what you feel are your strengths and difficulties, especially at work/college/university and in your daily life
- ✓ any challenges you faced at school and what support you had
- ✓ any members of your family who may have been diagnosed as having a learning difficulty
- ✓ why you chose to have an assessment

These questions serve to collate background information on you.

Types of Tests Used

Assessment of Learning = SUMMATIVE

- Cannot revise for tests
- Measure what you can do at current time
- Consider them as a way of providing evidence to support you in achieving your future aspirations and helping you become aware of your preferred way of learning
- Try not to worry but enjoy the process

Tests

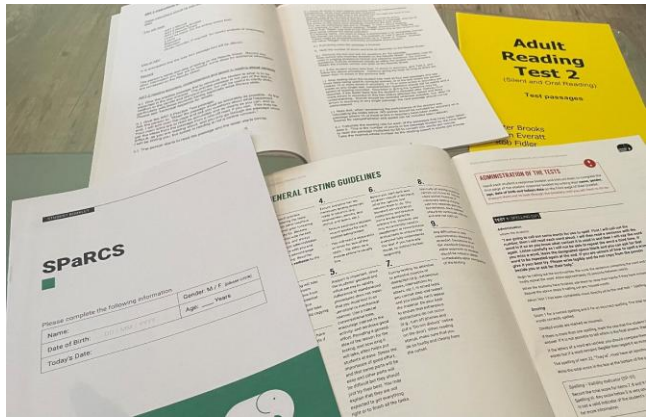
Ability

✓ ***Weschler Adult Intelligence Scale (WAIS)*** (16-90 yrs)

- ❑ **cognitive ability (verbal comprehension, working memory, processing speed, perceptual reasoning)**

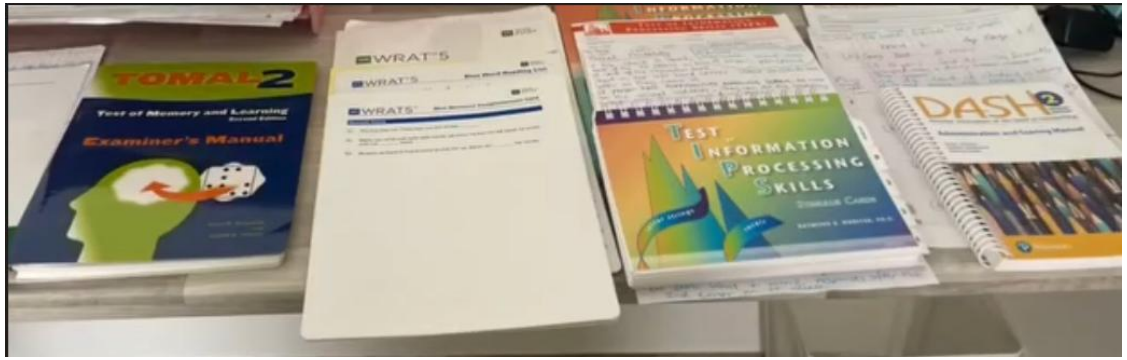
Attainment: reading, reading comprehension, spelling, writing

- ✓ ***Wide Range Achievement Test 5 (WRAT 5)*** **(5-85+ yrs)**
  - ❑ Single word decoding, reading comprehension (sentence), maths knowledge, single word spelling
- ✓ ***Adult Reading Test 2 (ART 2)*** **(16-25+)**
  - ❑ Oral reading speed & accuracy/fluency, silent reading speed, reading comprehension (longer passages which increase in difficulty), writing speed
- ✓ ***Test of Orthographic Competence 2 (TOC2)*** **(8-24.11 yrs)**
  - ❑ Spelling, punctuation
- ✓ ***Detailed Assessment of Speed of Handwriting 2 (DASH 2)*** **(8-25+)**
  - ❑ **Speed of writing (ability to speed up, no of words per min), letter formation, spelling, sentence structure, grammar, written fluency, organisation of ideas**



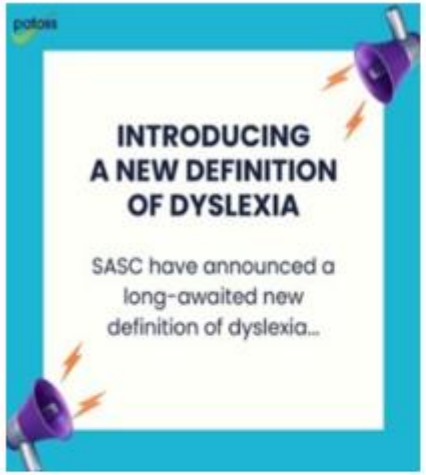
Other Tests: cognitive processing, fluency

- ✓ ***Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing 2 (CTOPP2)*** **(4-24.11 yrs)**
  - ❑ *phonological awareness* (sound blending, phoneme isolation, letter name-sound link), *phonological memory* (nonword repetition), *phonological production speed*- the pace at which a person processes what they hear = **reading speed** (rapid naming- letters & digits)
- ✓ ***Test of Information Processing Skills (TIPS)*** **(5-80+ yrs)**
  - ❑ Short term memory, working memory, delayed recall, word fluency (letter strings auditory & visual, remembering names of fruits & animals, writing/saying words beginning with a certain letter- timed exercise)
- ✓ ***Test of Memory and Learning 2 (TOMAL 2)*** **(5-59 yrs)**
  - ❑ A series of tasks to measure visual and verbal memory- ST and delayed recall (facial recognition, remembering position of dots, digit span forwards/backwards, recalling events in a story, repeating hand gestures)



What a Full Written Report Should Contain

- ✓ Background Information about you
- ✓ Tests Administered:
  - ❑ brief description of what each test measures, with results recorded in standard scores and percentiles
- ✓ Attainments:
  - ❑ detailed and clear explanation of your individual results, including your strengths and difficulties
- ✓ Recommendations:
  - ❑ summary of your results with recommendations for further support and accommodations that you may be eligible for; ie additional time in exams, use of a laptop, a training programme tailored to your needs & your job requirements
  - ❑ Bullet points of strategies to help you in the workplace, in education and in your daily life
  - ❑ Useful resources



HOT OFF THE PRESS!!!
15th May 2024

https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/news/introducing-a-new-definition-of-dyslexia

- *Dyslexia is primarily a set of processing difficulties that affect the acquisition of reading and spelling.*
- *In dyslexia, some or all aspects of literacy attainment are weak in relation to age, standard teaching and instruction, and level of other attainments.*
- *Across languages and age groups, difficulties in reading and spelling fluency are a key marker of dyslexia.*
- *The nature and developmental trajectory of dyslexia depends on multiple genetic and environmental influences.*
- *Dyslexic difficulties exist on a continuum and can be experienced to various degrees of severity.*
- *Dyslexia can affect the acquisition of other skills, such as mathematics, reading comprehension or learning another language.*
- *The most commonly observed cognitive impairment in dyslexia is a difficulty in phonological processing (i.e. in phonological awareness, phonological processing speed or phonological memory). However, phonological difficulties do not fully explain the variability that is observed.*
- *Working memory, orthographic skills and processing speed problems can contribute to the impact of dyslexia and therefore should be assessed.*
- *Dyslexia frequently co-occurs with one or more other developmental difficulty, including developmental language disorder, dyscalculia, ADHD, and developmental coordination disorder.*

How An Assessment Can Be Used To Support You

Equality Act (2010) 'A person has a disability if they have a *physical or mental impairment* which has a *substantial and long-term negative effect on their ability to carry out normal daily activities'.

An employer has a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' in terms of provision or adapting premises, to prevent the employee from being put at a disadvantage compared to their non-disabled work colleagues; eg adjustment of working hours or providing a special piece of equipment to help with the job.

An education provider has a duty to make 'reasonable adjustments' to make sure disabled students are not discriminated against; eg providing extra support and aids (specialist teachers or equipment).

- Dyslexia is ***not solely a difficulty with reading, writing, spelling & numeracy*** but includes weaknesses in other areas:

short term & long-term memory, working memory, phonological skills, sequencing, speed of processing (visual & verbal), organisation & executive functioning skills, time management..

Workplace Needs Assessment

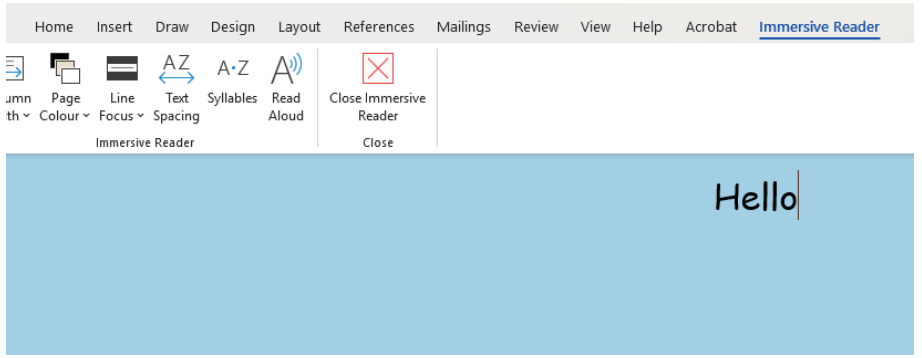
- To identify reasonable adjustments that can be put in place to support a dyslexic employee in the workplace
- Funds may be available through the *Access to Work* scheme
- A semi-formal remote interview with an experienced workplace needs assessor; looks at individual's job role, difficulties faced due to their dyslexia, as well as their strengths.
- The assessor will consider the concerns and requirements of the organisation/job before making recommendations for reasonable adjustments
- A report following the assessment, will be shared with both the employer and employee
- This does NOT give a diagnosis of Dyslexia; only a full diagnostic assessment can do that. Therefore, it is important, that there is such a diagnosis available.
- The employee must have been in the job role for more than 6 weeks and a job description must be provided

British Dyslexia Association

Workplace Difficulties & Reasonable Adjustments

➢ Following written & oral instructions

- ✓ Clear oral instructions, allowing for extra time to process info, repeat if needed and check employee has understood
- ✓ Use visuals (flow charts) for both oral & written instructions
- ✓ Highlight important points in a memo, email, provide questions in advance, send oral memos
- ✓ Allow extra time for reading
- ✓ Use of text to speech software



➢ Note taking & spelling:

- ✓ Allow extra time for writing tasks and for self-checking
- ✓ Use of speech to text software
- ✓ Use of a spell check
- ✓ Mind mapping

- **Formulating ideas during oral discussions**
  - ✓ Give time to respond and the confidence to do so in a safe, non-judgemental environment

- **Keeping track of appointments/scheduling work and meeting deadlines**
  - ✓ Use of Google/Outlook calendar, phone calendar
  - ✓ Use an agenda
  - ✓ Oral memos

- **Interaction with colleagues/asking for support**
  - ✓ Encourage employee to be open about the challenges they're facing at work
  - ✓ Reassure them that it is ok to ask for support and clarification
  - ✓ Everyone has their strengths & weaknesses; prioritise their strengths

- **Dealing with stress and anxiety**
  - ✓ Provide a safe, secure space for them to share any worries or areas of stress, with no judgement

Further Education: Accommodations and Support

➢ Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)

- ✓ Part funding for course fees, equipment (computer), study, travel
- ✓ A 'Needs Assessment'- an informal meeting to discuss support available for your studies. It can be in-person or remote
- ✓ A report with recommendations made & an entitlement letter explaining what support you can get, are given to you
- ✓ To get this, you must provide evidence of Dyslexia by providing a diagnostic assessment report

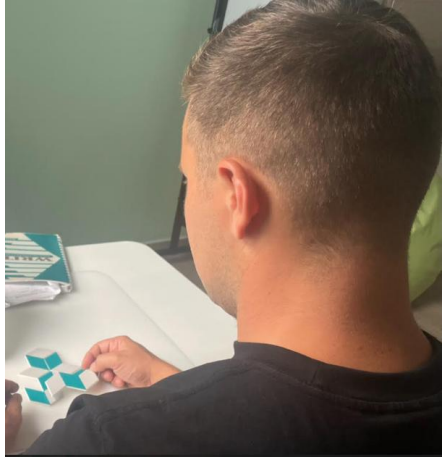
➢ Exam Access arrangements

- ✓ Additional time, use of a laptop, a reader, a scribe

➢ Classroom Accommodations

- ✓ Extra time for reading & writing, use of coloured overlays, reader pen
- ✓ Individual/group learning support: study skills, executive functioning & organisation, metacognition

How An Assessment Can Change Your Life



André

Assessed when 47 years old

- **WHY?**
  - Knew he wasn't stupid, but that there was something. Unable to finish his boating exams on time, had poor time management and was unsure why
  - Had developed strategies to deal with his difficulties (memory, spelling)
  - *DASH* test made him realise that it didn't matter how much faster he had to write, he still wrote slowly

- **BENEFITS OF BEING ASSESSED**
  - Realisation & reassurance that you're not stupid, that there's nothing wrong with you. Your brain just works in a different way = ACCEPTANCE
  - Extra time for exams – finally achieved his Masters Captain's exams

Mitch

Assessed when 30 years old. Felt comfortable as the assessment was held in a safe & secure environment. He was focused & determined to do well.

- **WHY?**
  - Knew his dad had been assessed and diagnosed with Dyslexia, so interested about the testing process and the exercises involved
  - Curious about the outcome

- **BENEFITS OF BEING ASSESSED**
  - To get additional time for Masters Captain's exams
  - Accepting that brain is wired in a different way
  - Boys are expected to sit still in the classroom. Students are judged on behaviour & literacy skills
  - Wished he had been assessed at school as he may have reached his full potential and been supported in a way that "my brain is programmed".

Final Words…

André

"If you're questioning yourself and think that there might be something wrong, get yourself assessed."

Mitch

"Get yourself assessed as it will help you understand yourself better, how your brain functions, and how your brain processes information to get strategies to help you learn."

Einstein

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

REMEMBER: You are NOT stupid… Allow yourself to learn about your unique strengths and embark on a journey of self-discovery…. GOOD LUCK!!

Where To Get Assessed:

British Dyslexia Association
http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/ *Go onto Services, then Assessments.*

Dyslexia Action Guild
https://dyslexiaguild.org.uk/
Click on *Find a professional(Directory)* for a list of assessors and contact details.

The Professional Association of Teachers of Students with Specific Learning Difficulties
https://www.patoss-dyslexia.org/ *Go onto Find a Tutor/ Assessor*

https://www.dyslexiasparks.org.uk/support-for-adults **Dyslexia Sparks** (Hull & East Yorkshire)

https://dyscalculianetwork.com/ **Dyscalculia Network:** Assessments in the UK for Dyscalculia and Dyslexia- a support network with a list of assessors

The British Psychological Society
https://www.bps.org.uk/ Click on *Find a Psychologist*

Other Support

https://www.gov.uk/rights-disabled-person/employment

https://www.gov.uk/pip/how-to-claim (you can apply for a *Personal Independent Payment* after your Dyslexia diagnosis)

https://carescribe.io/blog/is-dyslexia-a-disability-in-the-uk (info on definition of disability and on their products- assistive technology)

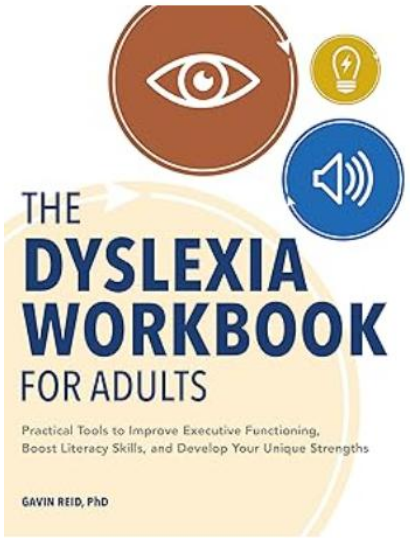
Workplace Needs Assessment
https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/services/assessments/workplace-needs-assessment

Info on screening, assessments
https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/adults/in-the-workplace/screening-diagnostic-and-workplace-needs-assessments

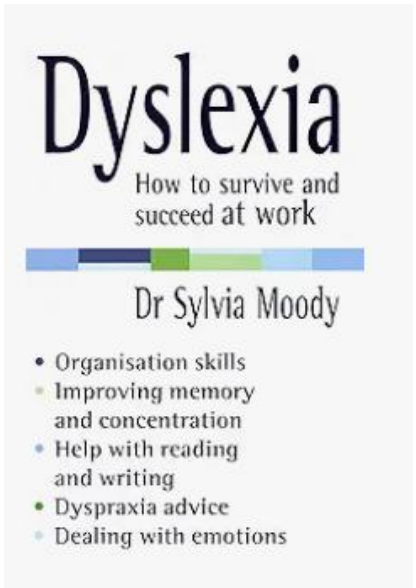
Access to Work (Funding for *Workplace Needs Assessments*, training costs and purchase of equipment)
https://www.gov.uk/access-to-work

Disabled Student Allowance (DSA)
https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowance-dsa

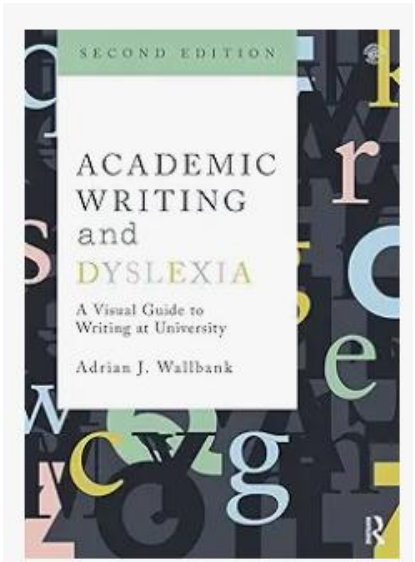
Books



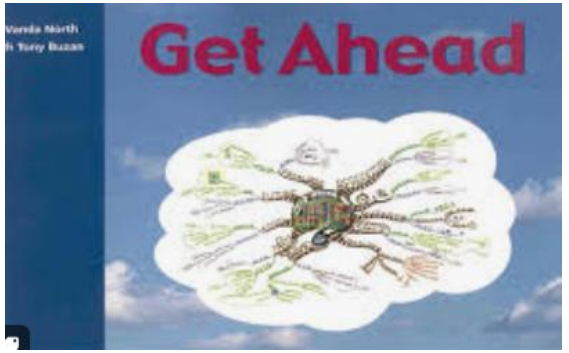
The Dyslexia Workbook for Adults- Gavin Reid



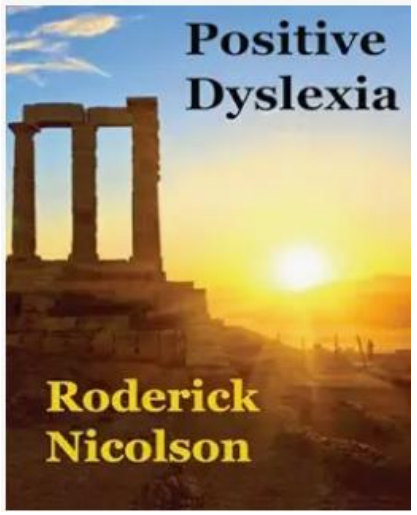
Dyslexia: How to Survive and Succeed at Work-
Dr Sylvia Moody



Academic Writing and Dyslexia: A Visual Guide to Writing at University-
Adrian. J Wallbank



Get Ahead: Mind Map Your Way to Success-
Vanda North & Tony Buzan



Positive Dyslexia-
Roderick Nicolson

Other Resources & Websites

Made By Dyslexia : Tips and factsheets in the workplace
https://www.madebydyslexia.org/resources/

Reader Pens https://www.scanningpens.co.uk/

Microsoft 365
https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/topic/accessibility-tools-for-learning

Natalie Brooks https://www.dyslexia-in-adults.com/
Jo Rees https://dyslexiclifewithjorees.com/
Darren Clark https://www.seninten.co.uk/podcasts/
Dr Martin Bloomfield https://dyslexiabytes.org/

Thank you for participating and for listening!

Contact

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SENat Learning Support Services

Nathalie Senat - Nice Special Education Consultant

senat_learning_support_

https://www.senatlearningsupportservices.com/

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