

GETTING STUDENTS WRITING

UNCOVERING ROOT CAUSE(S) TO SUPPORT 2E STUDENTS AND OTHER RELUCTANT WRITERS

Dr. Austina De Bonte

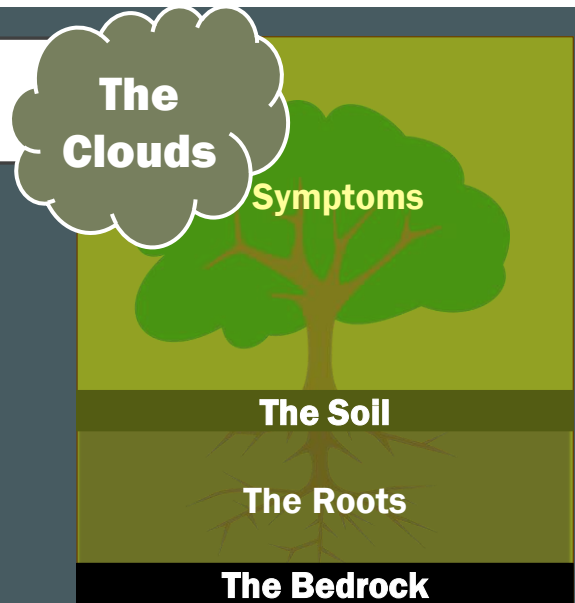
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President, WA Coalition for Gifted Education
Past President, NW Gifted Child Association

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AGENDA

- Neurodiversity & 2e Foundations
- Looking for Root Cause(s)
- The Soil: Executive Function
- The Roots: 5 Main Causes
- The Bedrock: 2 Underlying Causes
- The Clouds: Anxiety



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WHAT IS NEURODIVERSITY?

- Neurodiversity is not just about **autism**
- Different brain “operating system,” patterns of **strengths** and **challenges**
- **Careful**: neurodiverse brains are not “worse” (or “better”)
 - They are **DIFFERENT**
- Many common diagnoses are better understood as neurodiversity
 - **ADHD** – strengths in quick response time, acting under pressure, noticing changes
 - **Dyslexia** – strengths in 3D, visual/spatial, creativity, big picture, entrepreneurial
 - **Autism** – strengths in spotting patterns, details, logic, rules, deep interests

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**EVERY BRAIN IS UNIQUE -
JUST LIKE A FINGERPRINT**
(VALIZADEH ET AL., 2018)



HIGH IQ IS A FORM OF NEURODIVERSITY

- Regional brain volume is BIGGER in some areas (left hemisphere, bilateral frontal cortex, phonological loop, working memory, sensory, anxiety, **amygdala ← emotions**)
 - And smaller in others (lateral-parietal junction)
- DENSER connectivity between some areas (arcuate fasciculus, corpus callosum - “information highways”)
 - And sparser connectivity in others
- Development happens on a different timeline
- **High IQ brains are physically different**

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(Schnack, 2014)
 (Roman, 2018)
 (Haier, 2017)
 (Nusbaum, 2017)
 (Ganjavi, 2011)
 (Hilger, 2017)
 (Koenis, 2015)
 (Haier, 2004)
 (Wilke, 2003)
 (Frangou, 2004)
 (Shaw, 2006)
 (Lewis, 2018)
 (Burgaleta, 2014)
 (Roman, 2018)



gro-gifted.org

WHO ARE THE TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL (2e)?

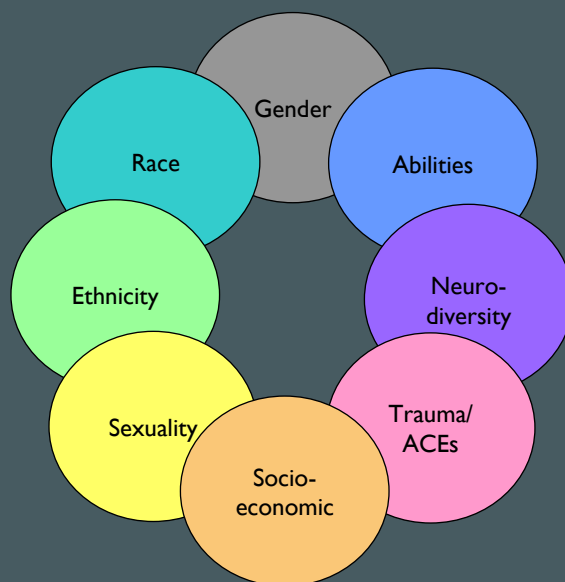
Bright, gifted, talented, **highly capable**, and/or high IQ
AND

Neurodiversity, disability, learning difference,
mental health concern, and/or other challenge

**“Their gifts may mask their disabilities
and their disabilities may mask their gifts.”**

(Reis et al., 2014, p. 222)

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Intersectionality
makes it even
more complex
for needs to get
properly recognized...

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WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WHEN KIDS HIT THEIR LIMIT?

- explosive behavior
- distractible
- trouble finishing work
- trouble getting started
- work takes way too long
- anxiety
- perfectionism
- low frustration tolerance
- impulsive
- Sometimes, minimal outward clues, or only at home/afterschool

Easy to Misunderstand
 “lazy”
 “unmotivated”
 “doesn’t care”
 “mis-identified as HiCap”

Probably a lot more kids are 2e than we think.
 Maybe even the majority of HiCap kids.

Many 2e kids never get properly
 identified as HiCap or for their disability.

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KIDS WANT TO DO WELL

“Kids do well when they can.”
 – Dr. Ross Greene

When there’s a problem, there’s a reason.

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IT HAPPENS MORE THAN YOU THINK

Symptoms can be **subtle** until kids reach their limit

- Masking vs. compensating
 - **Masking**: pretending to be “normal” (neurotypical) to blend in
 - **Compensating**: using strengths to make up for disability areas
- Implication #1: Masking & compensating takes **ENERGY**
 - Fatigue leads to overwhelm & dysregulation
- Implication #2: Challenging curriculum finally surfaces difficulties

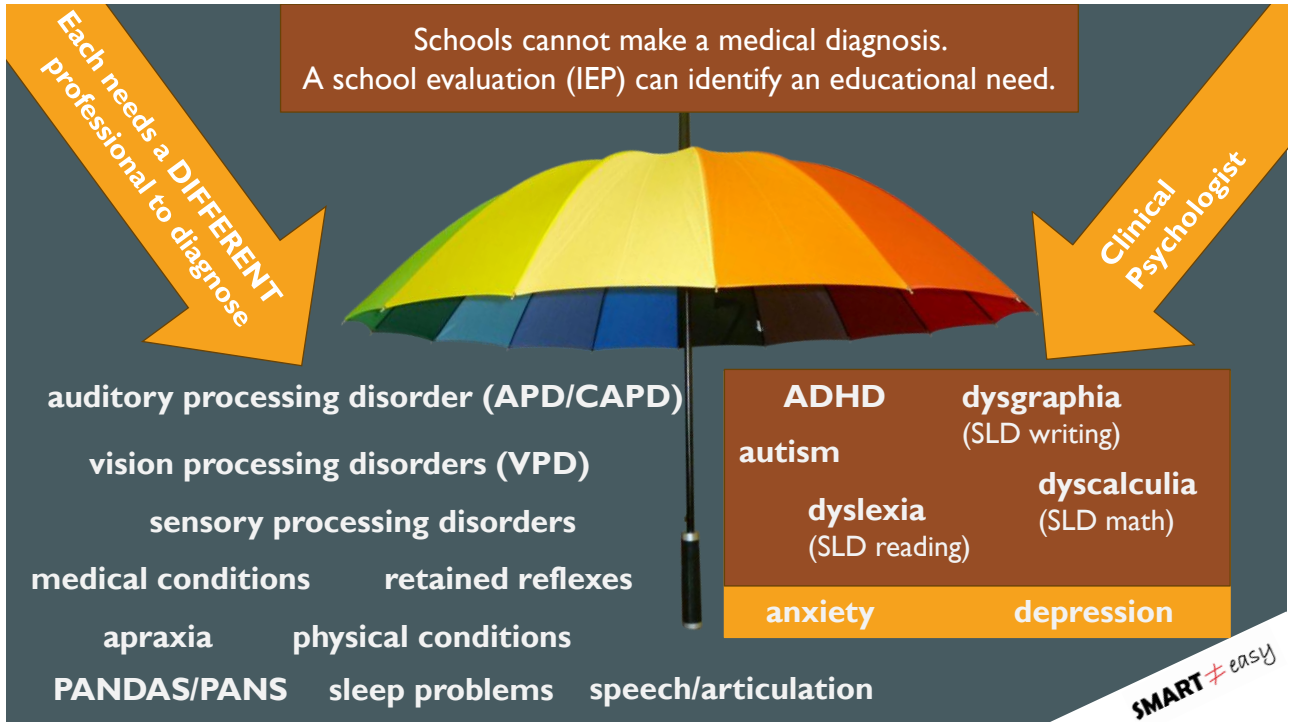
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BUCKET THEORY



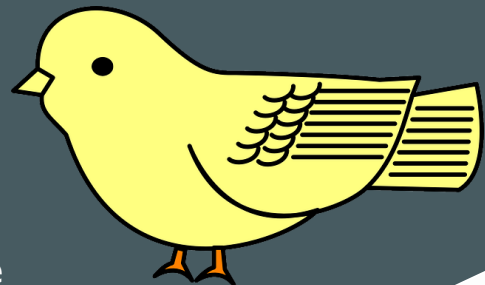
Bucket by Farra Nugraha
Rocks by James Cottell and Sean Maldijian from [Noun Project](#) (CC BY 3.0)

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WRITING IS HARD FOR MANY STUDENTS, NOT JUST 2E

- Reluctant writers are the **canary in the coal mine**
- Some kids will **NEED** supports, but other students with hidden needs will benefit from supports too
- Writing is a complex, multi-layered skill
- Likely **multiple** challenges, not just one



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FIRST, DO THEY HAVE TO WRITE?

“Don’t turn everything into a secret language arts lesson.”

– Dr. Susan Baum
Bridges Academy
The 2e Center

What is the learning objective?

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DEMONSTRATING MASTERY VIA STRENGTHS

- Draw a diagram
- Make a poster
- Create a slide presentation
- Draw a comic strip
- Record a podcast
- Make a video
- Build a model
- **Give choices...**

There are LOTS of ways to demonstrate mastery of a learning objective...

Flexible assignments

Encourage creativity

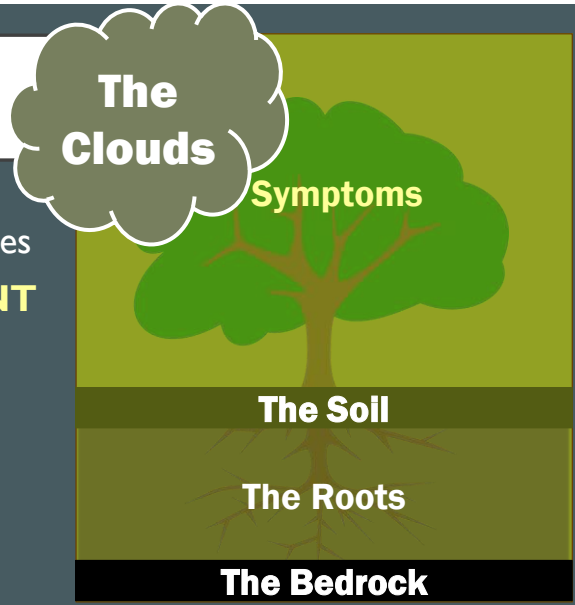
Build on student strengths

The point is communication of ideas

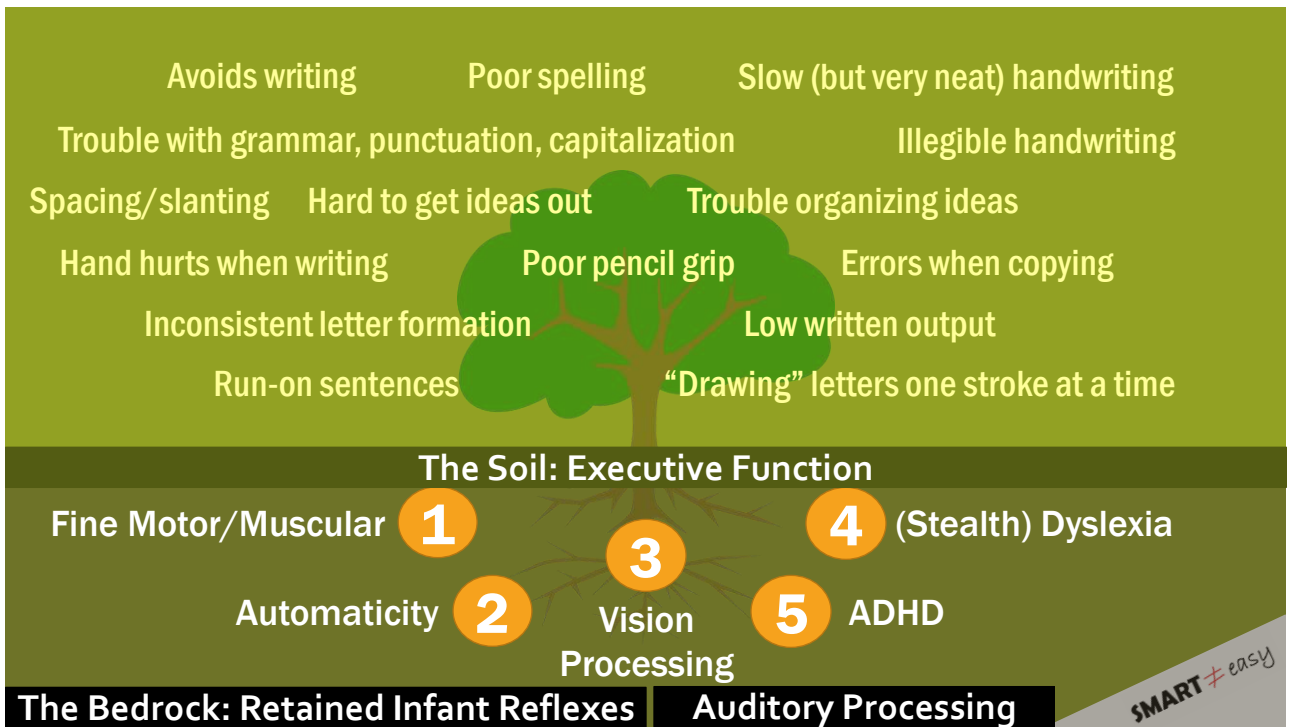
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LOOK FOR THE ROOT CAUSE

- Many possible causes of writing challenges
- Supports and strategies are **DIFFERENT** depending on the cause
- Applying an ineffective support causes frustration
- **OT only helps with ONE of the 5 main causes of writing trouble**



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The Soil: Executive Function

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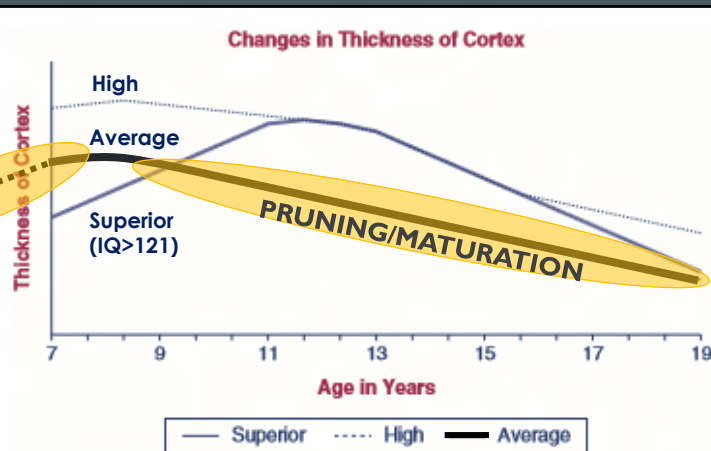


Figure 1.2 Changes in the thickness of the brain's cortex between the ages of 7 and 19 in individuals of superior, high, and average intelligence.

Source: Adapted from Shaw et al., 2006.

PHYSICAL DIFFERENCES IN BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

(SHAW ET AL., 2006)

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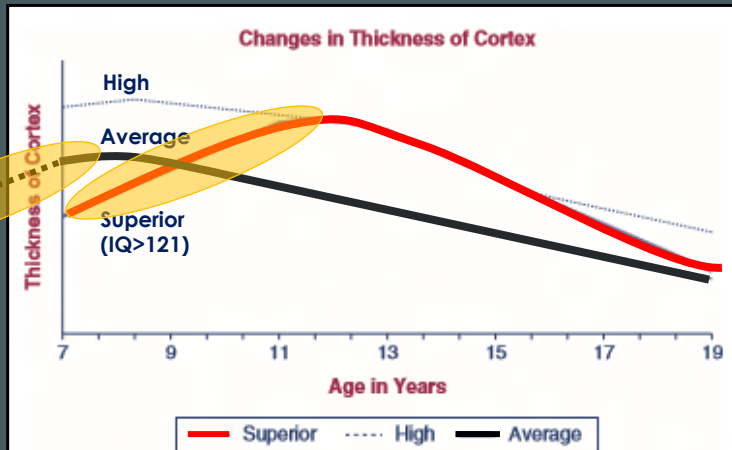


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**PHYSICAL
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IN BRAIN
DEVELOPMENT**

**TIMELINE FOR
BRAIN
GROWTH &
EXPANSION**

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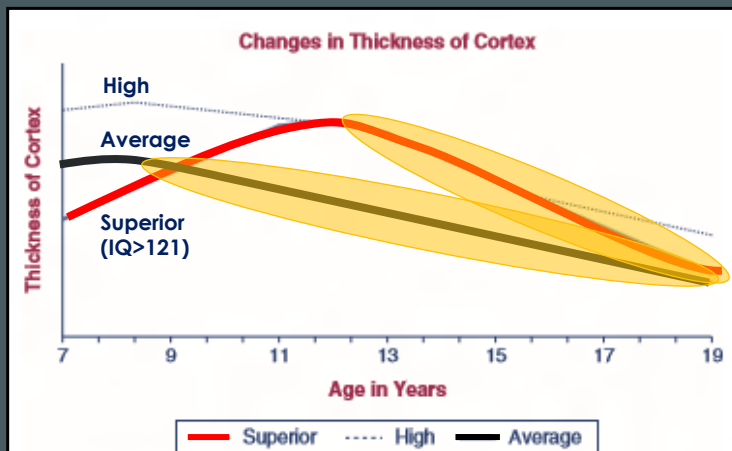


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**PHYSICAL
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IN BRAIN
DEVELOPMENT**

**TIMELINE FOR
PRUNING &
MATURATION**

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A DIFFERENT RESEARCHER SAYS:

“Kids who had higher IQs to begin with seemed to have an extended period in adolescence during which they retained the ability to **learn at a rapid pace**, just like much younger children.”

(Brant et al., 2013)

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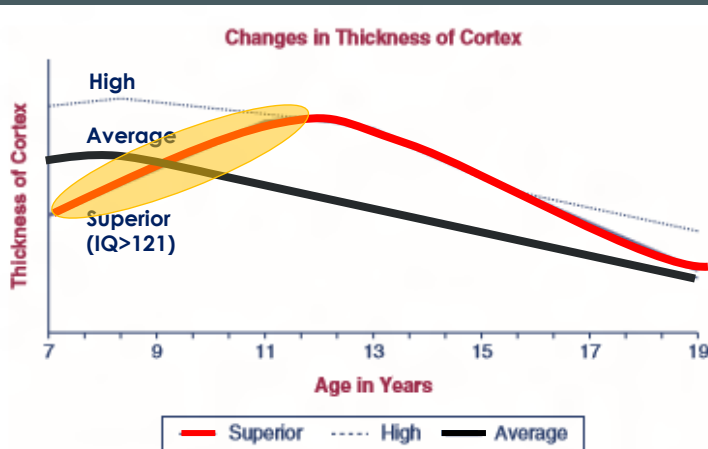


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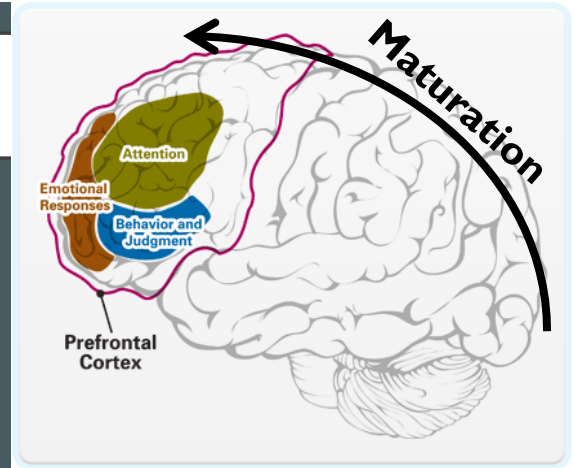
**TIMELINE FOR
BRAIN
GROWTH &
EXPANSION**

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YOUR BRAIN MATURES BACK TO FRONT

“Grey matter thickens in childhood but then thins in a wave that **begins at the back of the brain** and reaches the front by early adulthood”
(Powell, 2006)

“The **prefrontal cortex** is the decision-making part of the brain, responsible for [the] ability to plan and think about the consequences of actions, solve problems and control impulses.”



“Executive Function”

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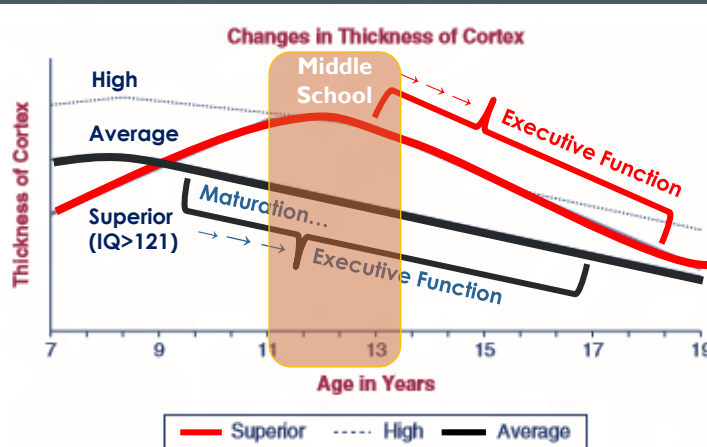


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**PHYSICAL
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**EXECUTIVE
FUNCTION
DEVELOPS
LATER?**

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WHAT IS EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Executive Function is NOT Correlated with Intelligence

“If I’m so smart, why can’t I find my keys?” – S



Organizing things, time, or procedures

Multitasking

Keep track of things

Planning

Time management

Breaking down projects



Impulse control, inhibition

Sustaining attention through distraction

Waiting to speak until it’s your turn

Mental flexibility

Black & white thinking

Initiating, getting started

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EXECUTIVE FUNCTION IS A COMMON CHALLENGE

- Many kids will grow into it
 - But probably not until mid high school (...up to age 25)
- Need scaffolding and accommodations
- **Tough love does not work**
 - Are report card grades measuring subject mastery or EF?
- **Goal:** Preserve self-confidence until brain maturation happens (avoid internalized messages about being “lazy” or “unmotivated”)

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SUPPORTING EXECUTIVE FUNCTION



Teaching Skills & Tools
Habits & Routines



Ongoing, Hands-on Help to Cue WHEN to Use the Tools

Fade into
Technology
Reminders

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Avoids writing Poor spelling Slow (but very neat) handwriting
 Trouble with grammar, punctuation, capitalization Illegible handwriting
 Spacing/slanting Hard to get ideas out Trouble organizing ideas
 Hand hurts when writing Poor pencil grip Errors when copying
 Inconsistent letter formation Low written output
 Run-on sentences "Drawing" letters one stroke at a time

The Soil: Executive Function

Fine Motor/Muscular

1

3

4

(Stealth) Dyslexia

Automaticity

2

Vision

5

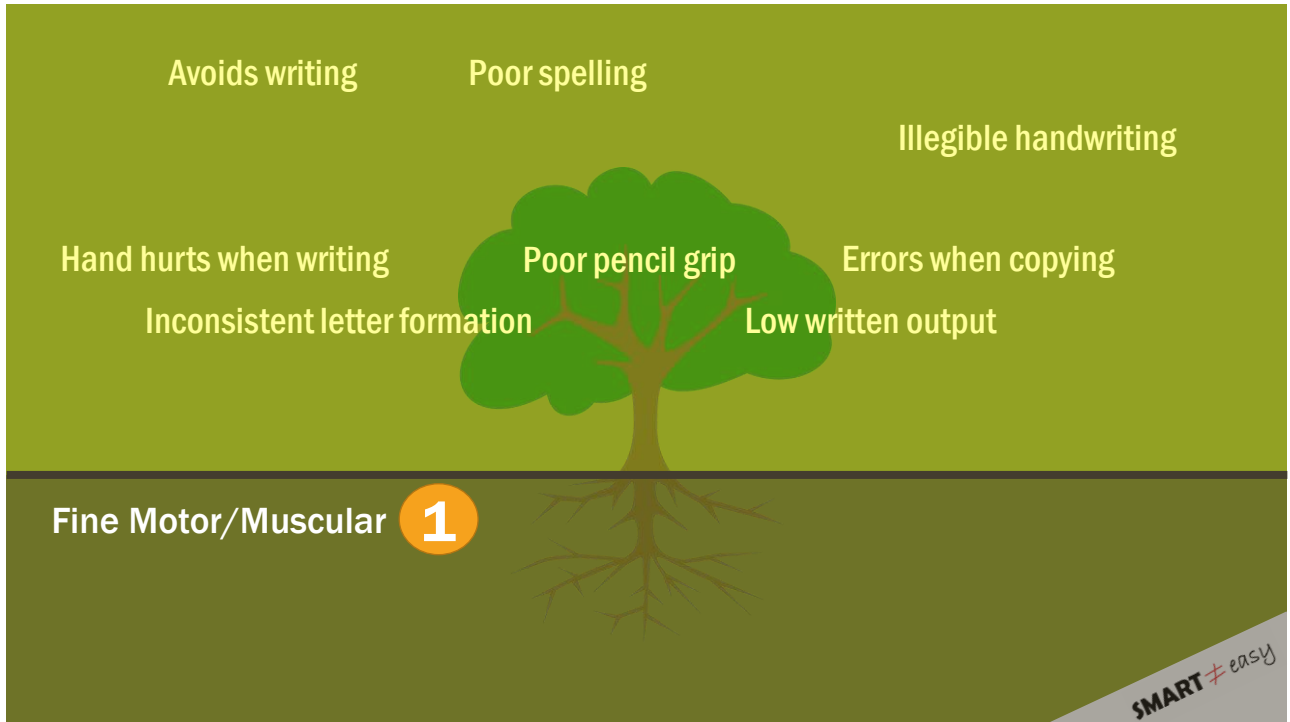
ADHD

Processing

The Bedrock: Retained Infant Reflexes

Auditory Processing

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FINE MOTOR/MUSCULAR

- Small muscles
- Big muscles
- Core/trunk muscles
- Stamina
- Coordination

Clues

“My hand hurts”

Unusual pencil grip

Posture/wriggling

ALSO trouble with drawing and crafts

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FINE MOTOR/MUSCULAR – HOW TO HELP

- Occupational therapy
- Tiny crayons/chalk
- Playdoh/clay
- Pencil grip devices
- Perler beads



After 3rd grade, switch to keyboarding or dictation

Avoids writing

Poor spelling

Slow (but very neat) handwriting

Illegible handwriting

Inconsistent letter formation

Low written output

“Drawing” letters one stroke at a time

Automaticity **2**

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AUTOMATICITY

- Brain-based automaticity of letter formation
- “Muscle memory” for letters and numbers
- Should be automatic by 2nd or 3rd grade

Clues

Unusual letter strokes

Letters on the same page look different

Messy handwriting

OR Very neat (but very slow)

“Drawing” each letter

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AUTOMATICITY – HOW TO HELP

Lazy 8 Exercise [Video](#)



- ◆ Cursive might give kids a 2nd chance
- ◆ Arrowsmith Program “Word & Tracing”

Need a LOT of repetition

After 3rd grade, switch to keyboarding or dictation

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ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

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UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

- Make ALL learning accessible to ALL students
- Provide accommodations & supports to ALL students – **just like a pencil**
 - Typing, dictation, SnapType, vision guide strips, headphones, flexible seating, etc.
- Allow ALL students to choose which tools to try

Some students think accommodations are “cheating” if they are the only ones allowed to use them

- Many other students will also benefit who will never be formally diagnosed

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ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

- Enable higher order thinking without getting bogged down in the mechanics
- Audiobooks
- Keyboarding/Dictation/Scribe
- Spellcheck
- Grammar tools/Grammarly

SnapTypeApp.com
iPad/iPhone
Chrome/Android

What Has the Superhero Done Lately?
Regular Past Tense Verbs
Directions: The superhero has been busy! Fill in each blank with a verb from the word bank.
Don't forget to change it to past tense!

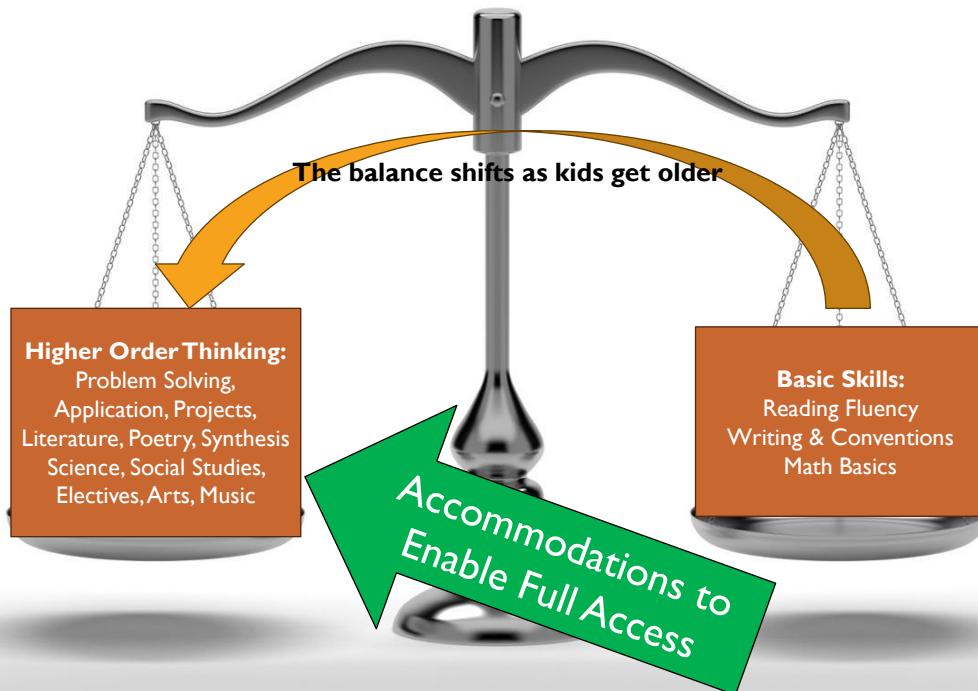
dance climb carry chase jump laugh

I jumped over a tall building to catch a thief.

I _____ up a tree to rescue a kitty.

_____ a _____ a _____ a
guy out of town. _____ a _____ a
hurt boy to the hospital.

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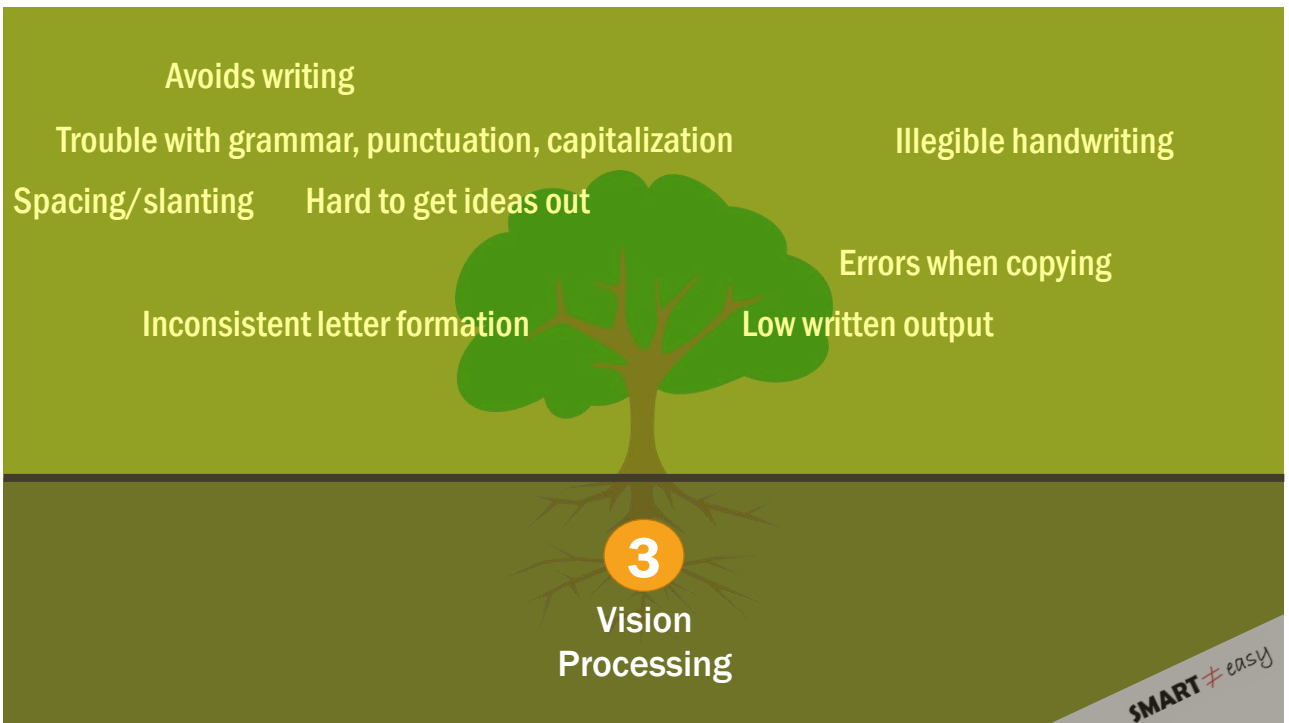


If accommodations are sufficient, this is what we should see.

<https://tinyurl.com/turtleskateboard>

Youtube @Cuddle Buddies

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VISION PROCESSING DISORDERS

- Brain-based
- Eyes working together
- Focusing and refocusing
- Trouble with 3D perception
- Intermittent blurriness – stamina!
- Letters/words can move/flip/double
 - b, d, p, q

Clues

Mistakes when copying

Capital letters mid-word

Missing punctuation

Silly mistakes in math (+ – x)

Inconsistent scores on tests

Prefer graphic novels

Clumsy/sports

VPD is NOT dyslexia, but it's possible to have both

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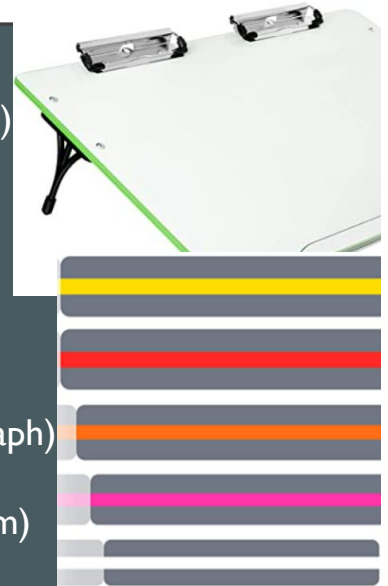
VISION PROCESSING DISORDERS (VPD) – HOW TO HELP

Home Interventions

- Diagnose with a specialist (covd.org, “F” credential)
- Vision therapy is effective at any age

School Accommodations

- Preferential seating up front
- Large fonts (enlarge worksheet, e-reader)
- Slant board
- Reading guide strips
- Turn notebook paper sideways for math (or ½” graph)
- Audiobooks (learningally.com)
- Typing all classwork/assessments (SnapTypeApp.com)



Avoids writing

Poor spelling

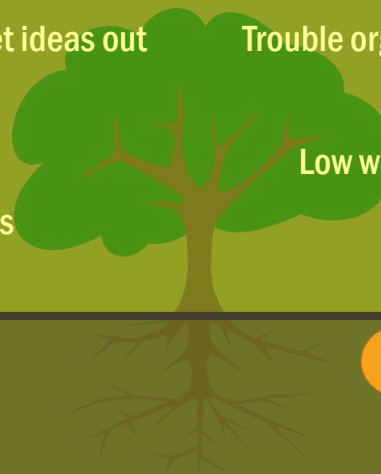
Trouble with grammar, punctuation, capitalization

Hard to get ideas out

Trouble organizing ideas

Low written output

Run-on sentences



4 (Stealth) Dyslexia

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(STEALTH) DYSLEXIA

- Phonological awareness
- Reads everything as a sight word
- Word → sounds → spelling
- Orthographic rules don't stick
- Despite this, excellent comprehension with elementary texts
- Screeners don't always work

Clues

SPELLING

Rhyming/Wordplay

Can't sound out words

Skips or substitutes words

Inconsistent scores on standardized tests

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STRENGTHS OF THE DYSLEXIC BRAIN

- **Verbal, creativity, visual-spatial, 3D, problem solving**
- **Narrative, contextual memory (big picture, whole to part)**
- But difficulty with
 - Rote memory
 - Working memory
 - Isolated facts
 - Math facts, multiplication tables, days of week, months of year...
- **Leverage visual strengths! Lookup tables for math**

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(STEALTH) DYSLEXIA – HOW TO HELP

Home/School Interventions

- High dose structured literacy (phonics, etc.)
- Home tutors: wabida.org, wiredforreading.co
- FREE: [treasurehunt.prenda.co](https://www.treasurehunt.prenda.co)

School Accommodations

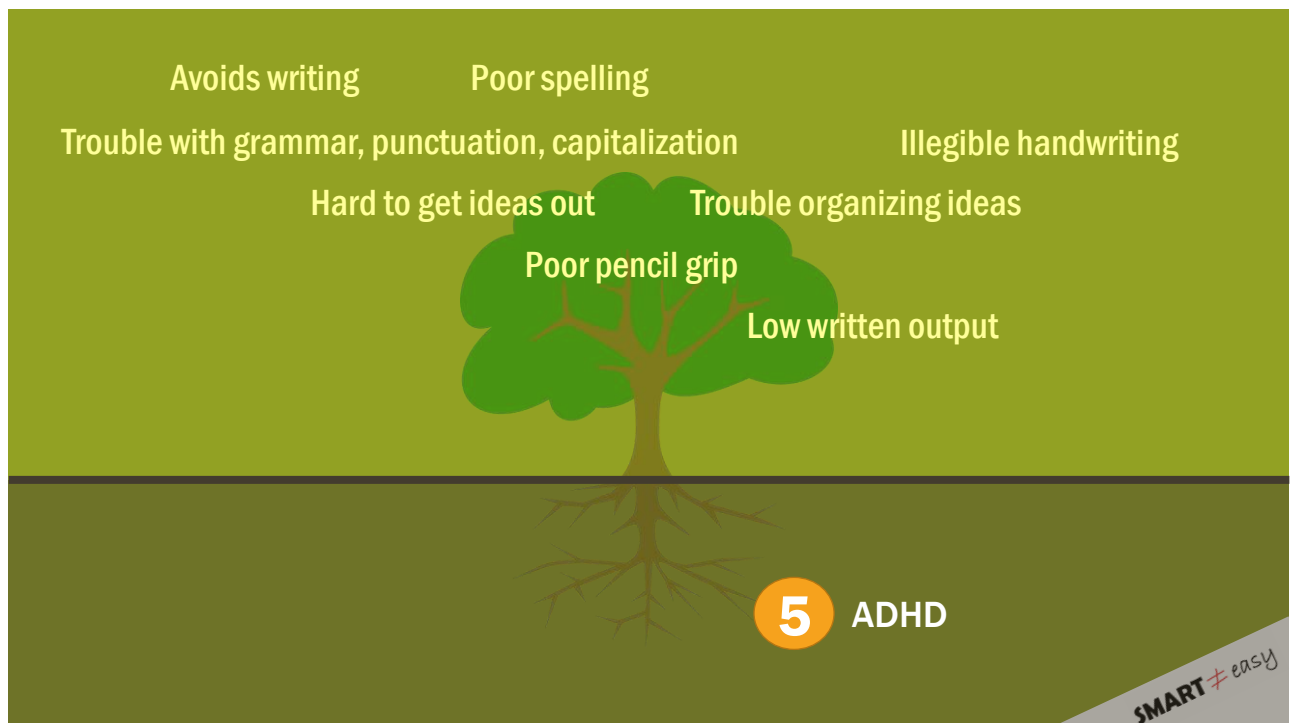
- Do not call on student to read out loud
- Audiobooks (learningally.com)
- Dictation or a scribe
- Typing all assignments/assessments (SnapTypeApp.com)
- Access to spellcheck for all assignments/assessments
- **DO NOT grade spelling (unless that is the learning objective)**
- Extra time for assignments/assessments

Don't Wait

Intervention in 1st or 2nd grade is twice as effective as intervention in 3rd grade (Lovett et al., 2017)

Free screener: www.thepasttest.com

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ADHD – AN INTEREST-BASED NERVOUS SYSTEM

Strengths: hyper-focus, noticing changes, decisions

Not lack of attention, trouble regulating attention

Can focus when: **(INCUP)**

Interesting

Novel

Challenging

Urgent

Pressure (Social)

(Dodson, 2018)

NOT: rote, boring, easy, even if very important

How to Self-Hack Your
ADHD Brain

Trouble getting started

Staying on task

Time management

Breaking down big projects

Executive function

Can produce when interested in the topic

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ADHD RESEARCH

- Movement in ADHD kids improves reaction time & oxygenation in Dorsolateral Prefrontal Cortex (Hoy et al., 2024)
- ADHD kids move more when working memory is needed (Orban et al., 2017)
- Fidgeting in ADHD adults increases sustained attention (Son et al. 2024)
- ADHD kids who had more intense movement had better performance on a cognitive task (Note: TD children performed worse with movement)
(Hartanto et al., 2015)
- **Emerging theory is that movement is a compensation strategy to maintain alertness in the ADHD brain**

Let ADHD kids MOVE! It helps them THINK

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ADHD STIMULANT MEDS

- **Undiagnosed/late diagnosed ADHD adults have higher risk of anxiety, depression, substance abuse (French et al., 2023)**

And also...

- Meta-analysis of 11 studies showed that structural brain differences in ADHD reduce with age and with stimulant treatment (Frodl & Skokauskas, 2011)
- “therapeutic oral doses of stimulants decrease alterations in brain structure and function in subjects with ADHD” (Spencer et al., 2013)
- “long-term stimulant treatment may normalize structural brain changes” (Schworen et al., 2013)
- 41 ADHD adults tried stimulants for the first time and saw “a normalizing effect of psychostimulant treatment” in brain structure over 3 years (Pretus et al., 2017)

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UNDERSTANDING ADHD STIMULANT MEDS

STIMULANT EFFECTS

- Appetite suppression
- Heart racing
- Anxiety, irritability
- Fast talking/moving
- High energy
- Small improvements
“running faster”

BENEFICIAL FOR ADHD

- “Colors are brighter”
- Calmer
- Less “racing thoughts”
- Less impulsivity
- Better emotional regulation

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ADHD – HOW TO HELP

Home Interventions

- Stimulant meds can help (and may be therapeutic)

Tools

- Standing desk, wobble chair, chair bands, fidgets, **walking lane**
- Technology for reminders

School Accommodations

- All of the Executive Function accommodations
- Body doubling – work with a partner
- **Make classwork INCUP**
- Non-distracting area for assessments

Beware: “extra time” may not help (if it’s purely ADHD)

Search: “ADHD accommodations ideas”

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THIS IS A TOUGH TRANSITION



Lots of interconnected ideas in brain



First, ●. Then ●, ●, and ●.
●. ●. ● because ●.

Linear writing, one word at a time

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HOW TO COACH

1. Get ideas out of brain **in a messy way**
2. THEN organize **where you can see it**

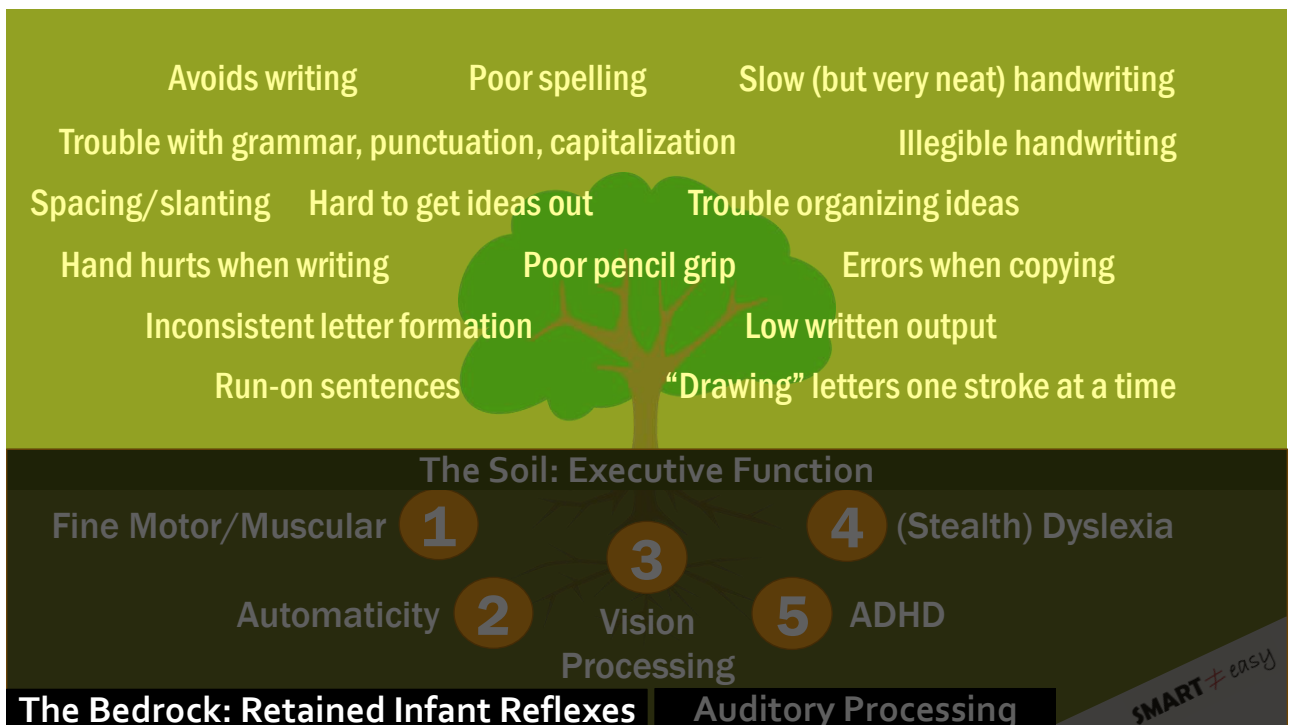
How?

- Sticky notes
- Mind map
- Drawing
- Dictation to a computer
- Human scribe
- **Walk & talk – pair students up**

Help each student find what works for them

Topic/paragraph
graphic organizers
WON'T HELP
in Step 1.
Why? They impose
order too soon

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RETAINED PRIMITIVE REFLEXES

- Primitive reflexes should have integrated by early childhood
- If still present, can cause a wide variety of concerns:
 - Trouble sitting still, poor coordination, motion sickness, anxiety, trouble with handwriting, unusual posture, unusual gait, toe walking, emotional dysregulation, balance/vestibular issues, clumsiness, ...
- Moro startle reflex – sensitivity to stimuli, sounds, tactile, lights, etc.
 - There are about a dozen others
- Trouble crossing the midline is one indicator of writing impact

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RETAINED PRIMITIVE REFLEXES – HOW TO HELP

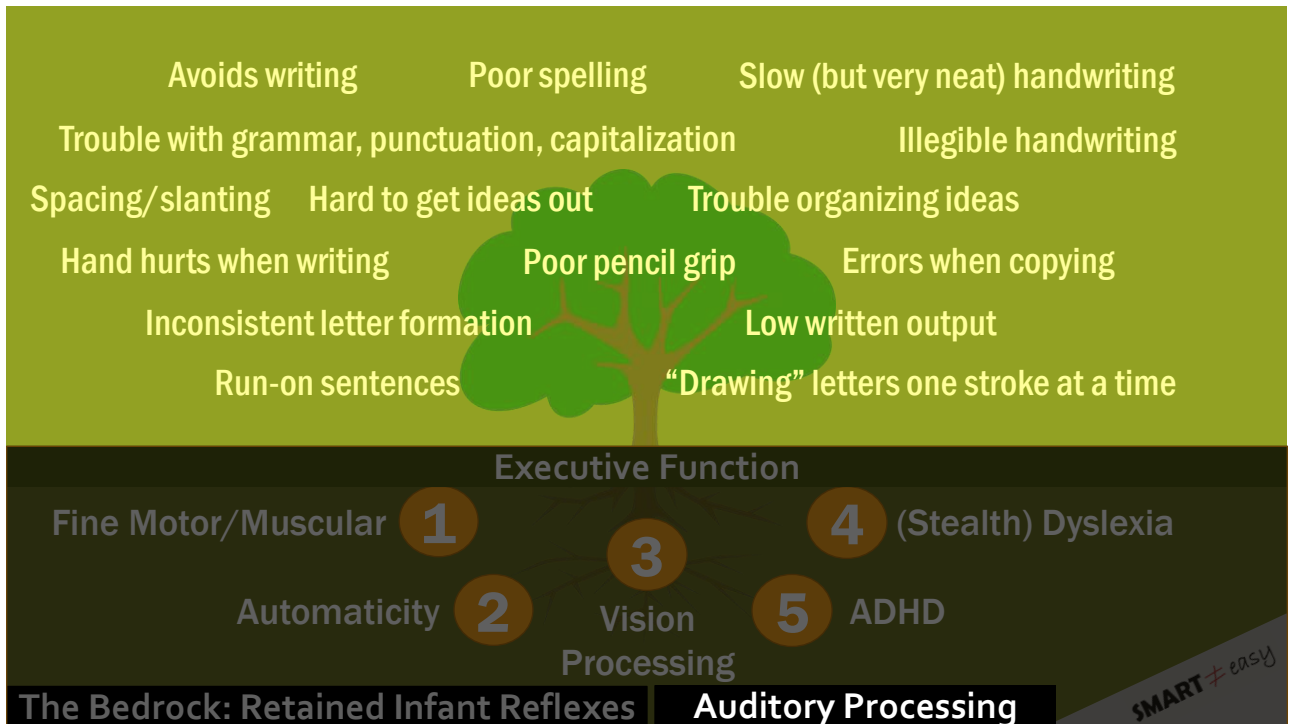
School/Home Interventions

- Exercises to re-integrate reflexes
- OT can handle the more common ones
- Physical Education can do reflex-targeted activities
- Work with a reflex specialist (ie. senseenabled.com or search online)

School Accommodations

- Allow movement in class (walking lane)
- Provide alternate seating (standing, wobble chair, etc.)
- Provide fidget tools

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AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER (APD)

Strengths: super-sensitive hearing, hears things others miss

One ear "hears" a split second before the other

Wears hats, hoods, long hair, headphones that cover the ears

Dislikes noisy environments, trouble understanding in background noise

Fatigue, comprehension problems in noisy environments

Doesn't hear name called. Misses or mishears classroom instruction.

Trouble with conversational timing (social!)

Rising anxiety/fatigue/frustration through the day

May look like ADHD, ODD, PDA, explosive behavior, or withdrawal

Common reason for classroom overwhelm/behavior

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AUDITORY PROCESSING DISORDER (APD) – HOW TO HELP

Home Interventions/Tools

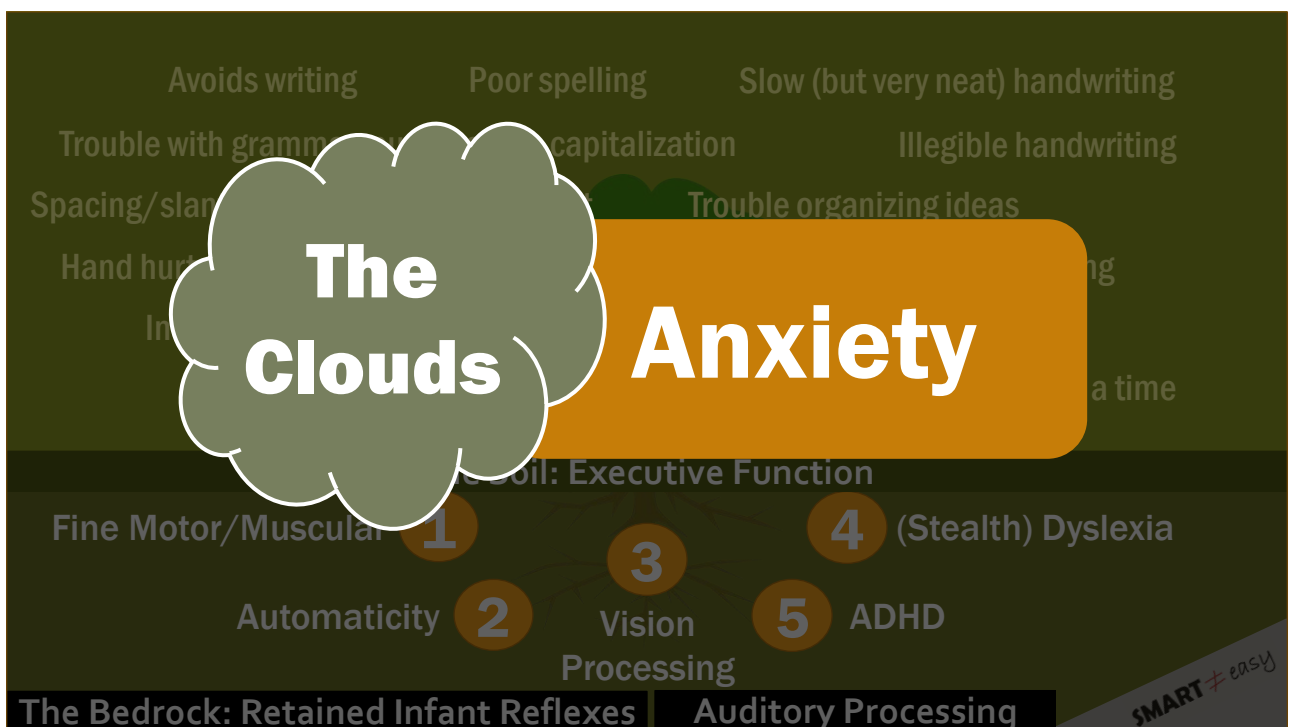
- Auditory therapies (many options; mixed results)
- Ear filter (ablekidsfoundation.org)
- Low gain hearing aids (drraestout.com)

School Accommodations

- Preferential seating away from noise
- Check in with student for understanding
- Auditory breaks with headphones or quiet room
- Headphones for focus work/assessments

- **Teacher always uses microphone!**

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ANXIETY

- Prior writing experiences that didn't go well
 - Unclear expectations, not enough guidance
 - Correcting every mistake
 - "I'm not good at this."
- Fear of criticism
- Time pressure
- Perhaps compounded by other disabilities/neurodiversity...

First, need to undo prior writing trauma

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PERFECTIONISM

What is perfectionism, actually?

- Erase a hole in the paper
- Hate criticism
- Dwell on mistakes
- Reach for impossible goals
- Want the first draft to be the final draft
- Hard to start
- **Afraid to risk failure**

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WRITING IS BEING VULNERABLE

- What if I make a mistake? (spelling, grammar, etc.)
- What if people don't like my ideas?
- What if people disagree with my viewpoint?
- What if I forget to say something important?
- What if they laugh at me?
- **Writing is a window into the soul**
- **Writing can be a very emotional experience**

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TAKE OFF THE PRESSURE

- **Stop criticizing**
- **Don't try to make it perfect**
- **Focus on the IDEAS, not the mechanics**
 - Don't correct spelling, grammar, unless it's REALLY important
 - Let kids have kid ideas (not adult ideas)
- **Strengths focus! Praise the progress, not the outcome**
 - Celebrate small successes
- **Small successes → bigger successes → self-confidence**

Developing confidence in writing is much more important than perfecting mechanics

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STRATEGIES THAT HELP – START WITH INTERESTS

- Start with inspiration
- Pick a high-interest topic or passion area
- Do an authentic project for a real audience
 - e.g. Write a persuasive letter and send it
- Modify school assignments to align with student interests
 - “Would it be OK if I wrote from the perspective of a biologist?”
 - “Can I write about the architecture of Ancient Rome?”
 - “Could I record a podcast on this topic instead?”

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STRATEGIES THAT HELP WITH GENERATING

- Don't push writing paragraphs until 4th-5th grade
- Offer sentence starters
- Get them talking
- The first draft will not be perfect
 - “It's faster to write a quick draft and edit”
- When in doubt, provide more SUPPORT
 - Not pressure
 - Walk & talk, scribe, draw, ...
- Use the tools. Make your peace with technology

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STRATEGIES THAT HELP WITH EDITING

- Have student read it out loud
 - Or have the computer read it
- Learn how to use tools
 - Spellcheck, grammar check, thesaurus, e.g. Grammarly
 - Typing, dictation, text-to-speech (to hear what you wrote)
- Offer feedback, don't insist
 - "You're the author." "Listen first, decide later."
- It doesn't have to be perfect – let some things go!
 - Don't feed the perfectionism monster

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IEP/504 ACCOMMODATIONS TO CONSIDER

- Allow student to type all classwork & assessments
 - Or, dictation software
- Access to spellcheck for all classwork & assessments
- Access to [SnapTypeApp](#) for all classwork & assessments
- Reduced repetition - Do the 3-5 hardest problems
- Extra time on classwork & assessments
- Scribe for classwork & assessments
- Turn notebook paper sideways for math
- ½" graph paper for math

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SAT
ACT
AP/IB

PROVIDING HELP THAT'S ACTUALLY HELPFUL

- **Different strategies for different causes**
- Interventions & Tools
- Accommodations

When in doubt,
Provide more support

UNDERSTANDING IS KEY

- When kids understand their own strengths/challenges, **they're no longer walking on quicksand**
- When adults recognize the **reasons** for kids' challenges/behaviors
 - Provide neurodiversity-affirming, strength-based supports
 - **We can find much more empathy & patience**
 - Stop blaming kids for things that are largely outside their control

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BONUS CONTENT

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THE BRIGHT STUDENT DILEMMA



**Most kids
“learn how to learn”
in elementary school**

Reading, spelling, subtraction, multiplication, etc.

Learning to tolerate confusion, recovering from mistakes, asking for and receiving help...

Building persistence, perseverance, grit, growth mindset

Time management, study skills (middle school)



**Bright students
already know
most of the curriculum**

School is too easy, not challenging

Two implications:

1. Lack of opportunity to build these skills
2. Any 2e disabilities remain hidden

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HOW KIDS BUILD GRIT & GROWTH MINDSET



Effort

Leads To



Results

Provide experiences with **genuine** challenge

Teach grit & growth mindset
in an area of **STRENGTH** (not disability)

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REMINDER:
ADULTS DON'T HAVE TO BE GREAT AT EVERYTHING

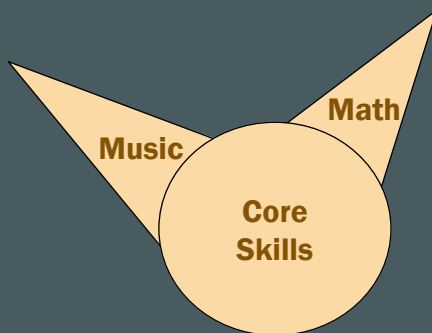


Adult careers will focus
on **STRENGTHS**

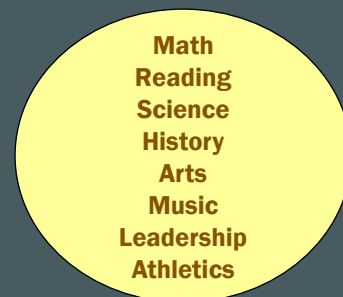
Adults find “niche”
environments that
support or avoid
their weaknesses
(Armstrong, 2012)

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Spiky Strengths



Well-Rounded



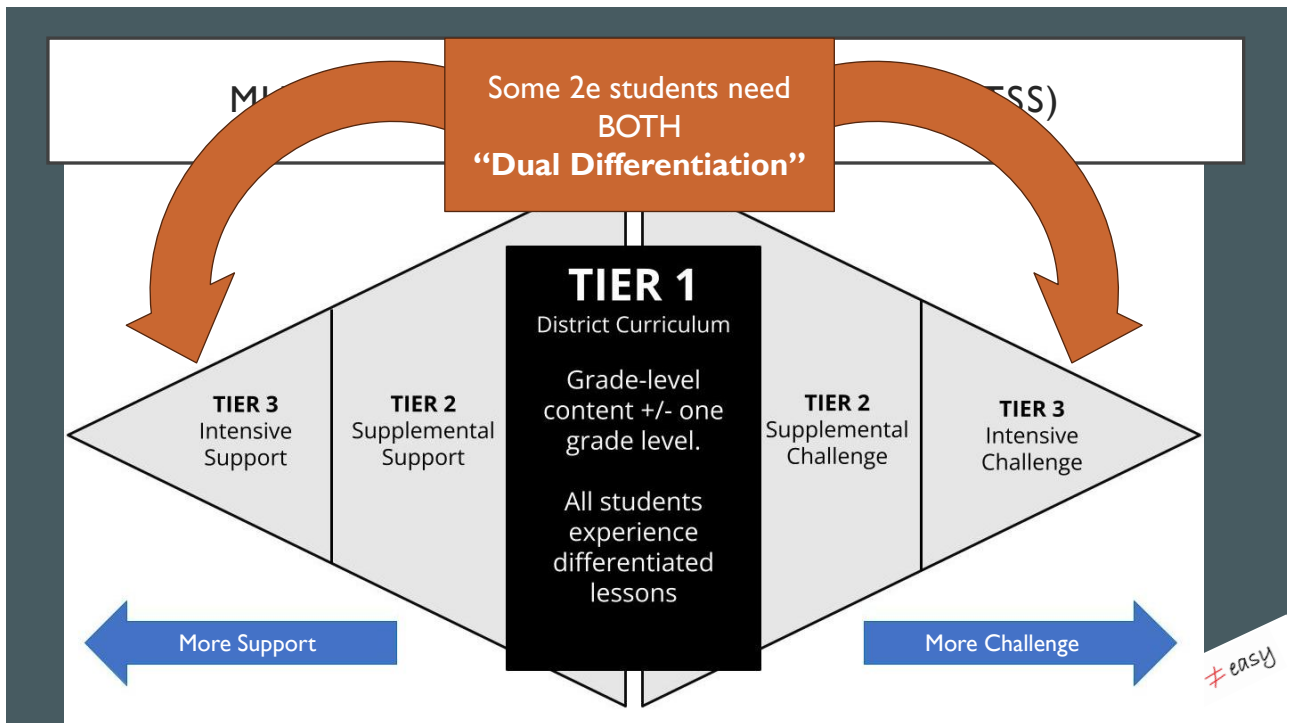
Colleges are looking for “spiky” applicants!

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GOAL: INDIVIDUALS, NOT CLONES



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POLYVAGAL SAFETY IS ESSENTIAL

Learning only happens here

Porges Polyvagal Theory (2011)

- **Neuroception: Nervous system is constantly scanning the environment for safety**
- Co-regulation with safe, trusted others

Create a neurodiversity-affirming classroom (& home)

- Relationship with teacher (& parents)
- Environmental safety in classroom (& home)
- Relational safety with classmates (& family)

Ventral Vagal
safe, connected,
calm, social

Sympathetic
fight/flight/freeze
flop/fawn
"take action"

Dorsal Vagal
shutdown,
overwhelm



Adapted from Deb Dana 2022; Porges 2011



Rewarding neurotypical learning styles teaches ALL kids that neurotypical brains are superior.

This is harmful to neurodivergent kids.



CREATE A NEURODIVERSITY AFFIRMING CLASSROOM & HOME ENVIRONMENT

Infographic by #neurowild on Instagram & Facebook

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HOW STUDENT NEEDS MIGHT DIFFER

- Vision Clarity/Stamina
- Light Sensitivity
- Auditory Clarity/Sensitivity
- Tactile Sensitivity
- Self-Regulation
- Organization Skills
- Emotional Sensitivity
- Need for Movement
- Social Differences

Our Job

Honor individual differences

Provide supports to maximize student learning

Keep supporting until development catches up

Protect from psychological harm

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OUR GOAL

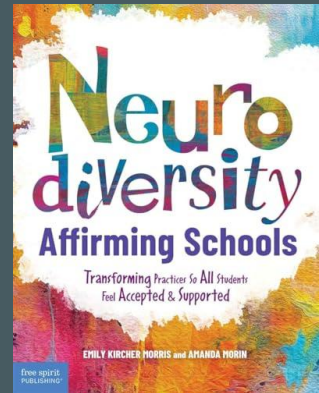
- Every student feels safe 100% of the time
- Every student can be their authentic self MOST of the time
 - **Minimize the amount of masking/compensating needed to participate**
 - (Sometimes we do need conformity for safety)
- Every student is **DIFFERENT** – so to achieve this goal we must be

FLEXIBLE

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THE NEURODIVERSITY-AFFIRMING TEACHERS COMPACT

- We believe difference is different, **not less**.
- We believe all students learn **differently**.
- We believe in showing **respect** to all students.
- We believe all students deserve **accommodation and differentiation**.
- We believe all students should have **agency**.
- We believe in honoring **advocacy**.
- We believe all students **can – and should** – participate.
- We believe in holding all students to **high expectations**.



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Thank You

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