Strategies to Engage Struggling Readers with Learning Differences

February 2022

Bookshare
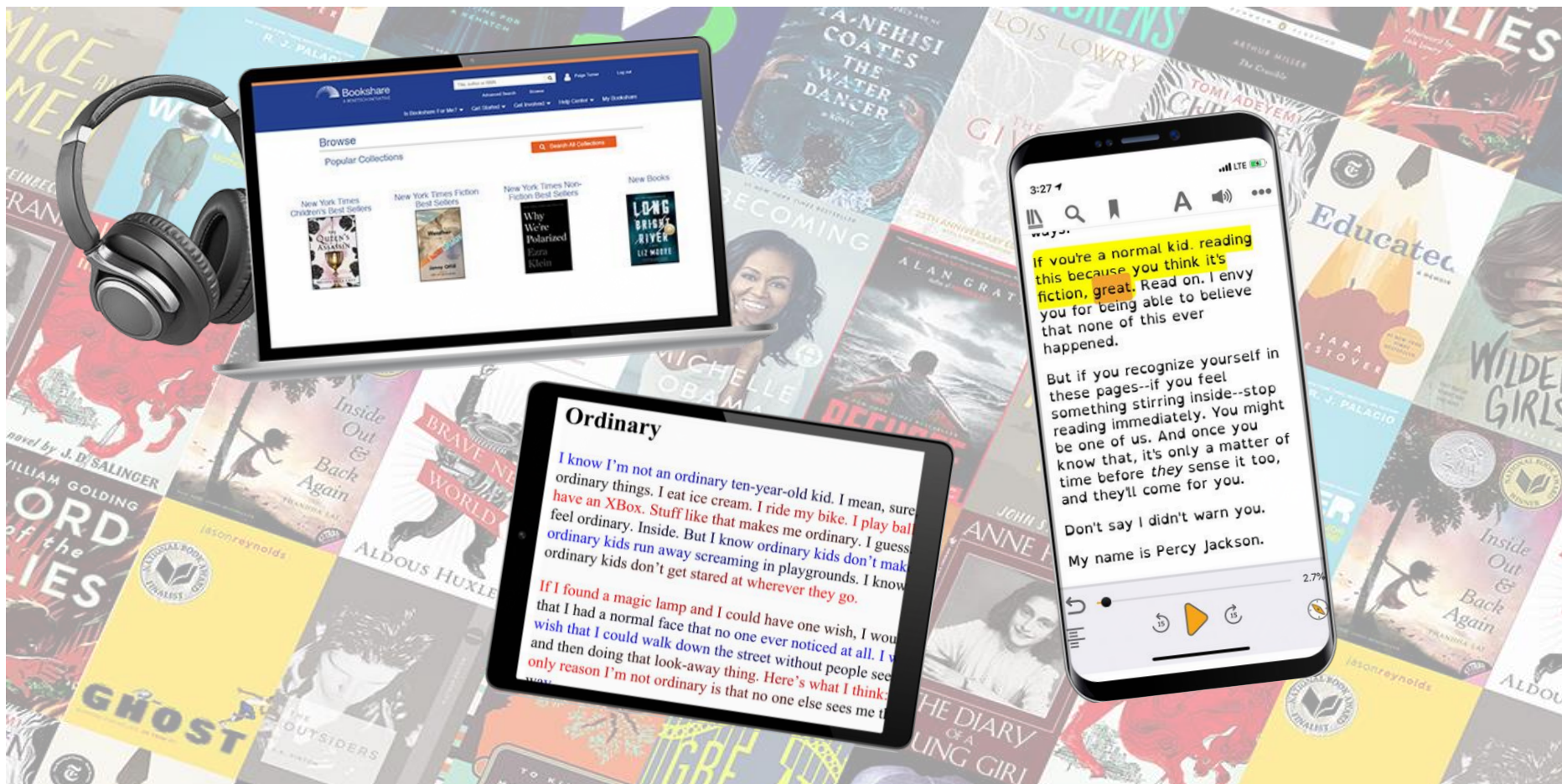A BENETECH INITIATIVE
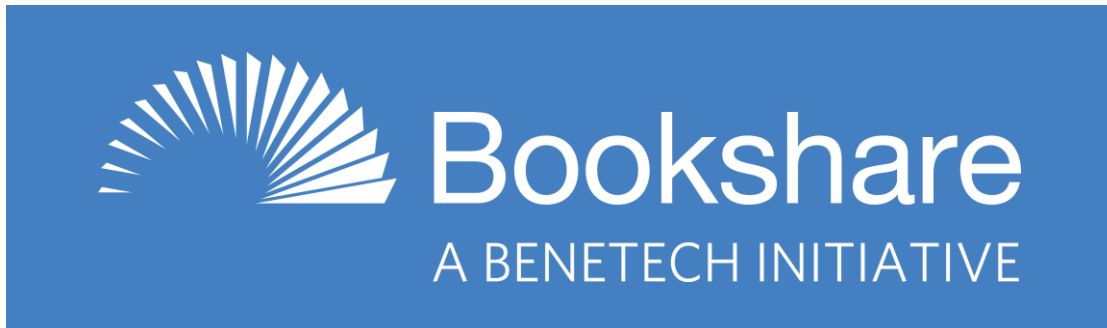
Poll

How familiar are you with Bookshare?
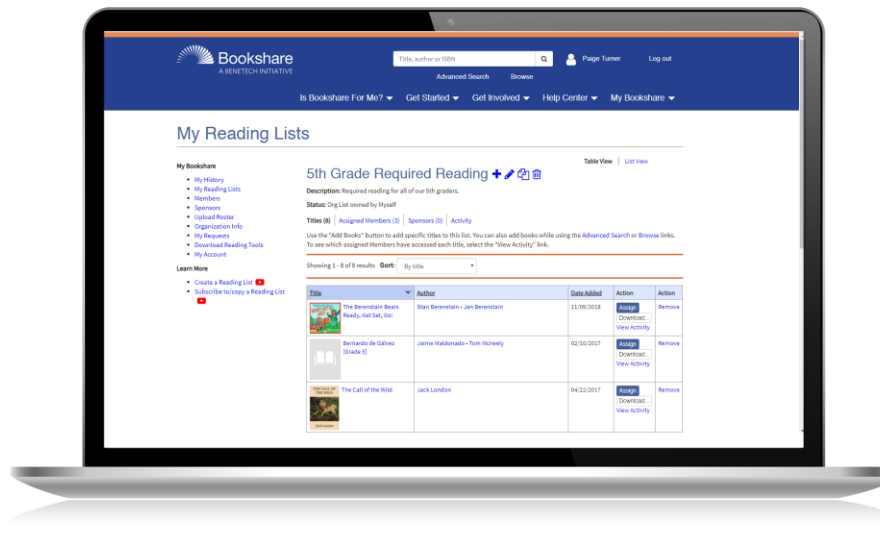
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Learning Outcomes

- What is Bookshare and who is eligible?

- Get a student and parent perspective.

- Learn from Understood Expert, Dr. Andy Kahn.

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What is Bookshare?

Who Qualifies?

An "eligible person" is someone who:

- has a **learning disability** OR
- Is **Blind** OR
- a **physical disability** which impacts the way they interact with standard print.

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Kayley & Alanna, Ella & Beth

Bookshare

# Andy Kahn - Understood.org

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Learning Objectives

- Be able to identify what learning and thinking differences are — and what they are *not*.

- Know the emotional impact learning and thinking differences can have for students.

- Be able to name the three benefits of inclusive technologies in helping students with learning and thinking differences.

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Learning and Thinking Differences
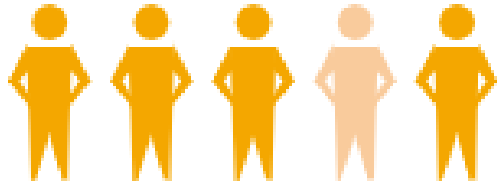
1 in 5

1 in 5 people have variations in how the brain processes information that can affect reading, writing, math, focus, and following directions.

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Learning and Thinking Differences ARE…

- Real!

- Differences in how the brain is wired.

- Not always obvious.

- Variable — students with the same disability will be affected in different ways.

- A reason to provide information in a variety of ways.

- Common, and require teachers and parents to exhibit sensitivity and flexibility.

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Learning and Thinking Differences Are NOT…

✖ Something that's "wrong" with a student.

✖ A reason to pull a student from class to "fix their problem."

✖ A weakness that shows that students just need to work harder.

✖ Signs that someone is less intelligent or less capable.

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Emotional Responses You Might See

- Books as a trigger for emotions

- Anxiety, anger, frustration

- Misbehavior and acting out

- Lowered self-confidence

- Limited classroom engagement

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Emotional Reactions You Might See

- Negative comparisons when peers succeed on reading tasks

- Self-criticism, refusals, and self-distraction as forms of protection

- Escape and avoidance for survival

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"I'm bad at math."

How many times have you heard someone say that?

How about

"I'm bad at reading?"

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A BENETECH INITIATIVE

Different Learners, Different Needs

Tablets, smartphones, and computers are great ways to break the painful association of books with reading struggles.

Children are far more likely to read on screens than on paper outside of school as they use social media, play video games, and watch videos.

Providing great content in a way that works for each student is key.

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New Roads to Exciting Places

- Creative teaching, inclusive technologies, and flexible thinking are ***key***!

  - Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

  - High-interest books using students' preferred devices: win-win

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Bookshare: Changing How Reading Looks and Feels

- Privacy, portability, and comfort reduce anxiety.

- Customized learning experiences increase **agency**.

- Students can control reading speed and how the text looks (size, color).

- Learning via multiple senses provides more opportunities for success.

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Bookshare: Hearing and Seeing

- Text-to-speech provides a verbal model, letting students know how words on the page *sound*.

- Students with dyslexia benefit from audio support as they decode challenging text.

- Karaoke-style highlighting helps students follow along as they listen.

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Is It Cheating? NO!

- Brain imaging studies show similar neurological activity whether you read with your eyes or listen as a book is read aloud.[1]

- Students who read along as books are to them with text-to-speech are activating the same brains areas as those who are just reading the text.

- More choices mean more opportunities for independent reading!

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Comfort and Pace

- With Bookshare, students can set their own pace, rewind, and repeat in privacy.

- Easy navigation and familiar controls lower frustration levels for students.

- The privacy of using Bookshare on a device with headphones is a benefit for both home and school. A reader no longer has to feel embarrassed.

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Many Benefits to Bookshare

- Students can now bring books home and listen to the text without having an adult read it to them.

- Parents and children of lower SES families who listen to enhanced ebooks together may have deeper conversations and longer responses about what they read.[2]

- Students can explore and share books with younger siblings, creating a connection and bringing reading into their daily activities.

- Students build greater motivation to read as well as showing improved fluency and comprehension.[3]

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Bookshare as a Study Aid

- Bookshare is compatible with numerous apps that support note-taking and other study supports.

- Voice Dream Reader is directly integrated with Bookshare, and offers 200+ voices and note-taking support.

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Bookshare Facts

- Access to over a million books, magazines, and other titles

- A free service to students with identified learning, visual, physical, or perceptual disabilities that would limit independent reading

- Available on all major technology platforms: Mac, Windows, iOS, Android, etc.

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Next Steps for Families

Have a story to share?

communications@Bookshare.org

Need specific membership help?

membership@Bookshare.org

Curious for more information?

www.Bookshare.org

www.Understood.org

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What We Learned…

– What Bookshare is and which categories of students are eligible.

– Got a student and parent perspective

– Learned from Understood Expert, Dr. Andy Kahn

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Please complete short survey!

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Thank You!

Tell us how we can help

CONTACT BOOKSHARE!
Get live help via phone (1-650-352-0198)
M-F, 5 a.m.- 5 p.m. PST or email
membership@Bookshare.org

Contact Understood!
www.understood.org

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References

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2. Troseth, G. L., Strouse, G. A., Flores, I., Stuckelman, Z. D., & Johnson, C. (2020). An enhanced eBook facilitates parent–child talk during shared reading by families of low socioeconomic status. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 50*(1), 45–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2019.02.009

3. Wood, S. G., Moxley, J. H., Tighe, E. L., & Wagner, R. K. (2018). Does use of text-to-speech and related read-aloud tools improve reading comprehension for students with reading disabilities? A meta-anaylsis. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 51*(1), 73–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/0022219416688170

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