

Accommodate Neurodivergent Readers with Organizers and Systematic Strategies

NANCY ROOP



nancyroop.com/resources



Neurodiversity Affirming & Introduction

Polyvagal Theory—*think fight or flight*

Three Neurodivergent Readers

Accommodations

Take aways and—*some Glimmers!*



Resources

Visual Strategies for Improving Communication

Linda A. Hodgdon

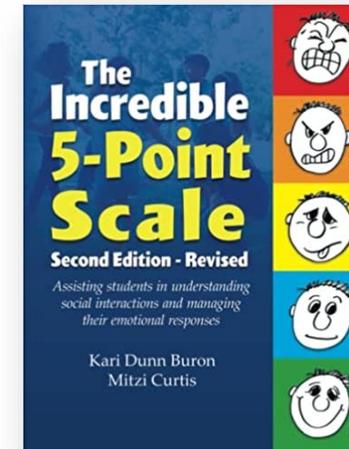
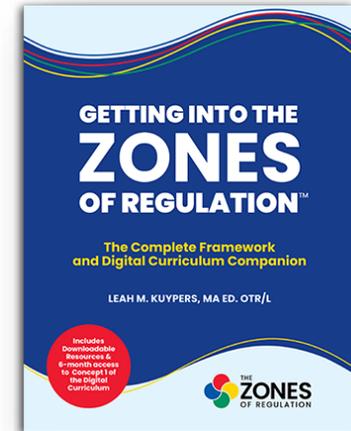
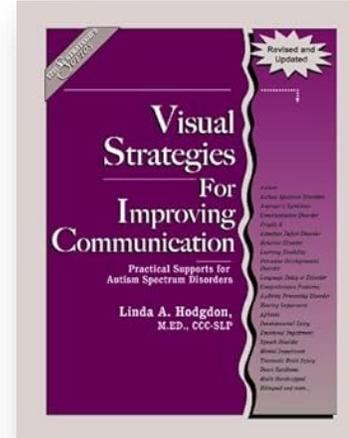
The Zones of Regulation

Leah M Kuypers

The Five Point Incredible Scale

Kari Dunn Buron

Mitzi Curtis



Resources

Neurodiversity Affirming Schools

Emily Kircher Morris

Amanda Morin

The Writing Revolution 2.0

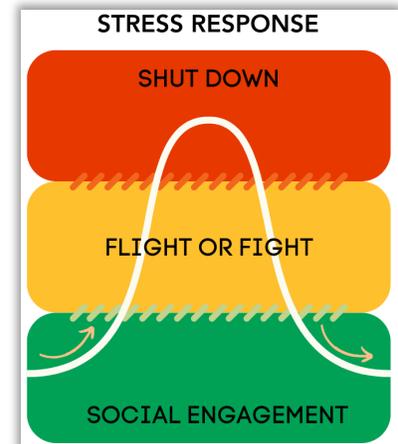
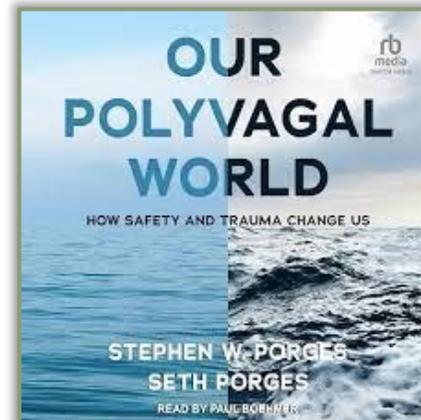
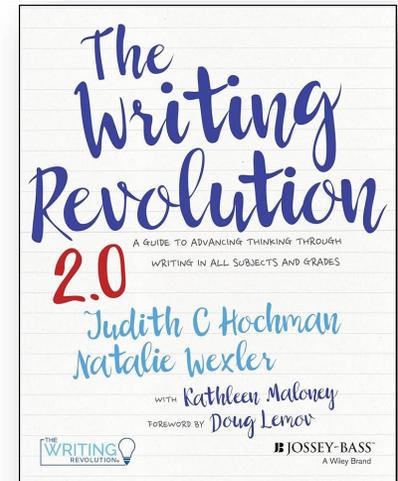
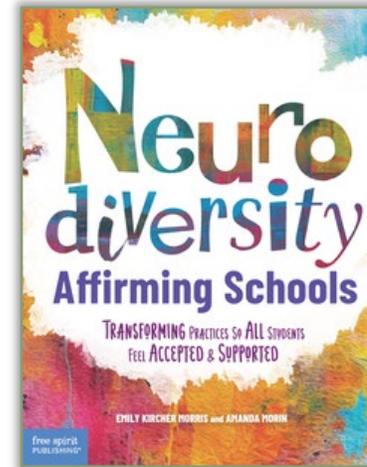
Janet C. Hoffman

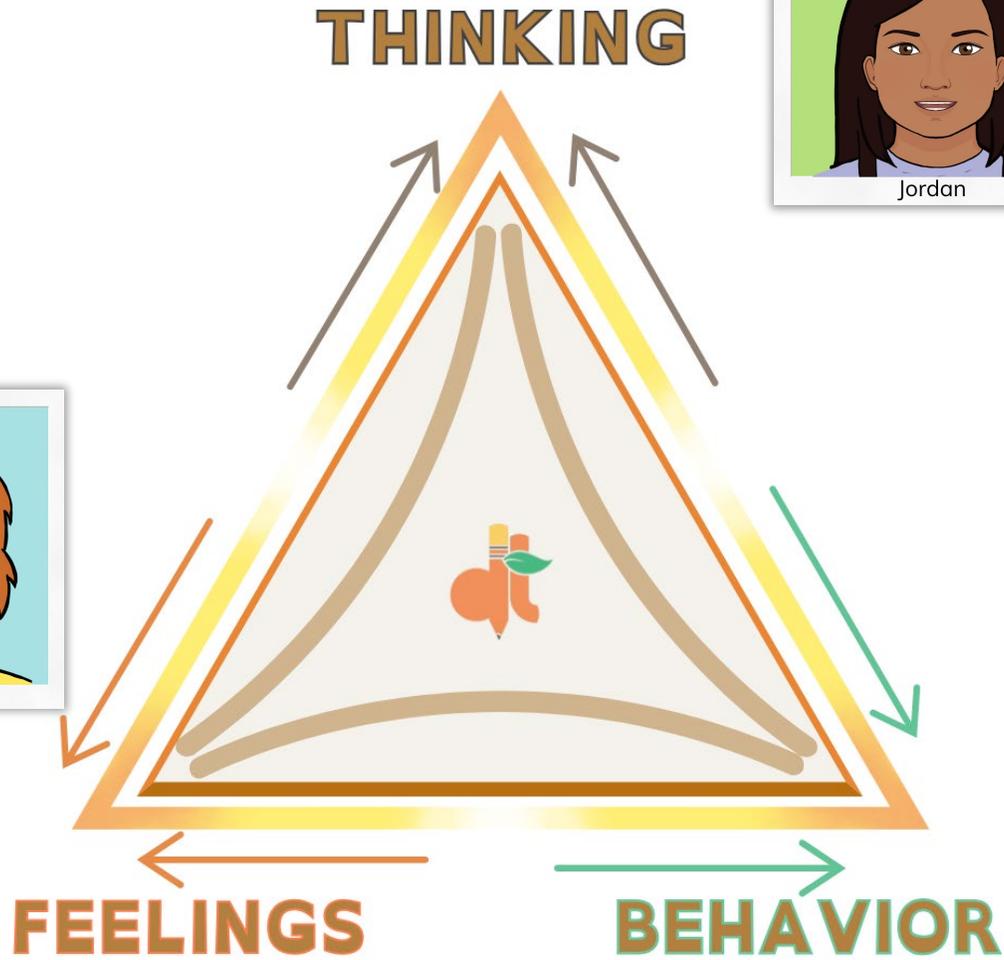
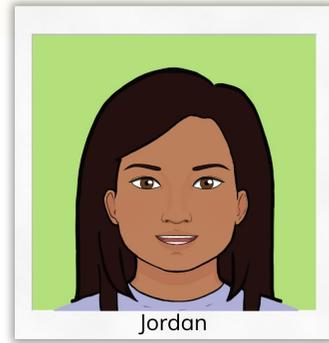
Natalie Wexler

Our Polyvagal World

Stephen W. Porges

Seth Porges





Thinking, Feelings, Behavior Triad



**PARA TO
PARA**



Nancy Roop

Author Publisher

Developmental Texts

Paraeducator Coach and Trainer

Para to Para

Special Education Substitute Teacher

Former Paraeducator

Education

BA in Integrative Studies,
Oakland University





Nancy Roop Author

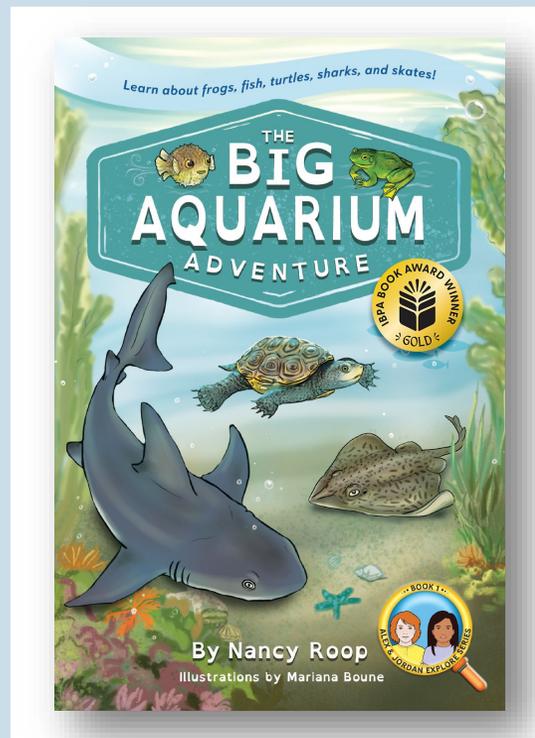
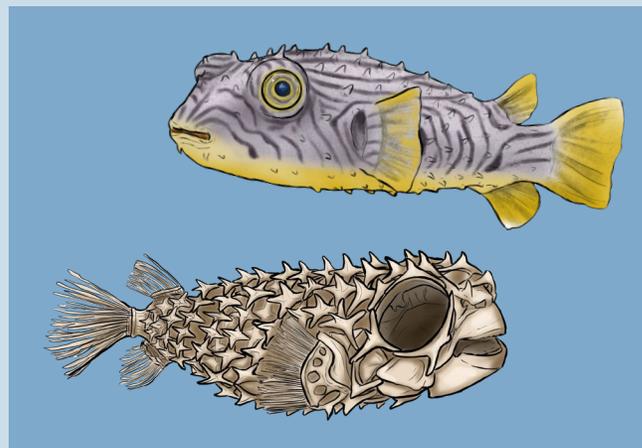
Evidence-based comprehension strategies

Builds background knowledge

Beautiful illustrations

Designed for neurodivergent readers

Real, relatable, and relevant!





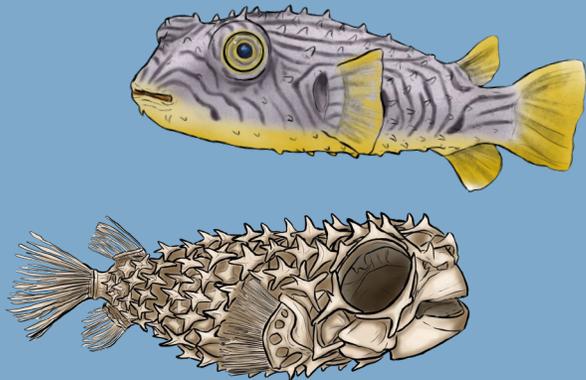
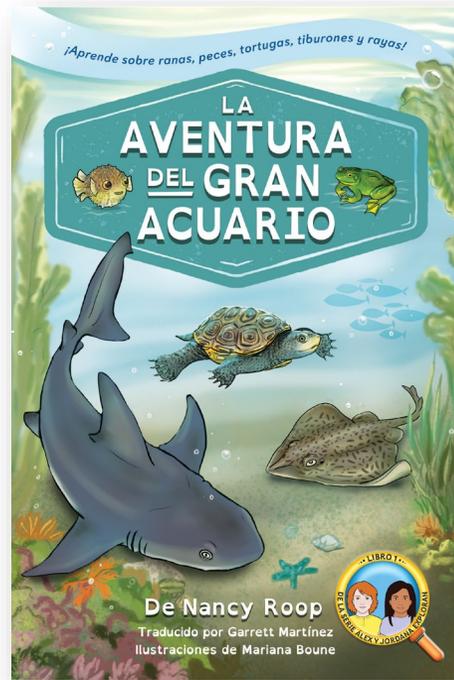
Nancy Roop Author

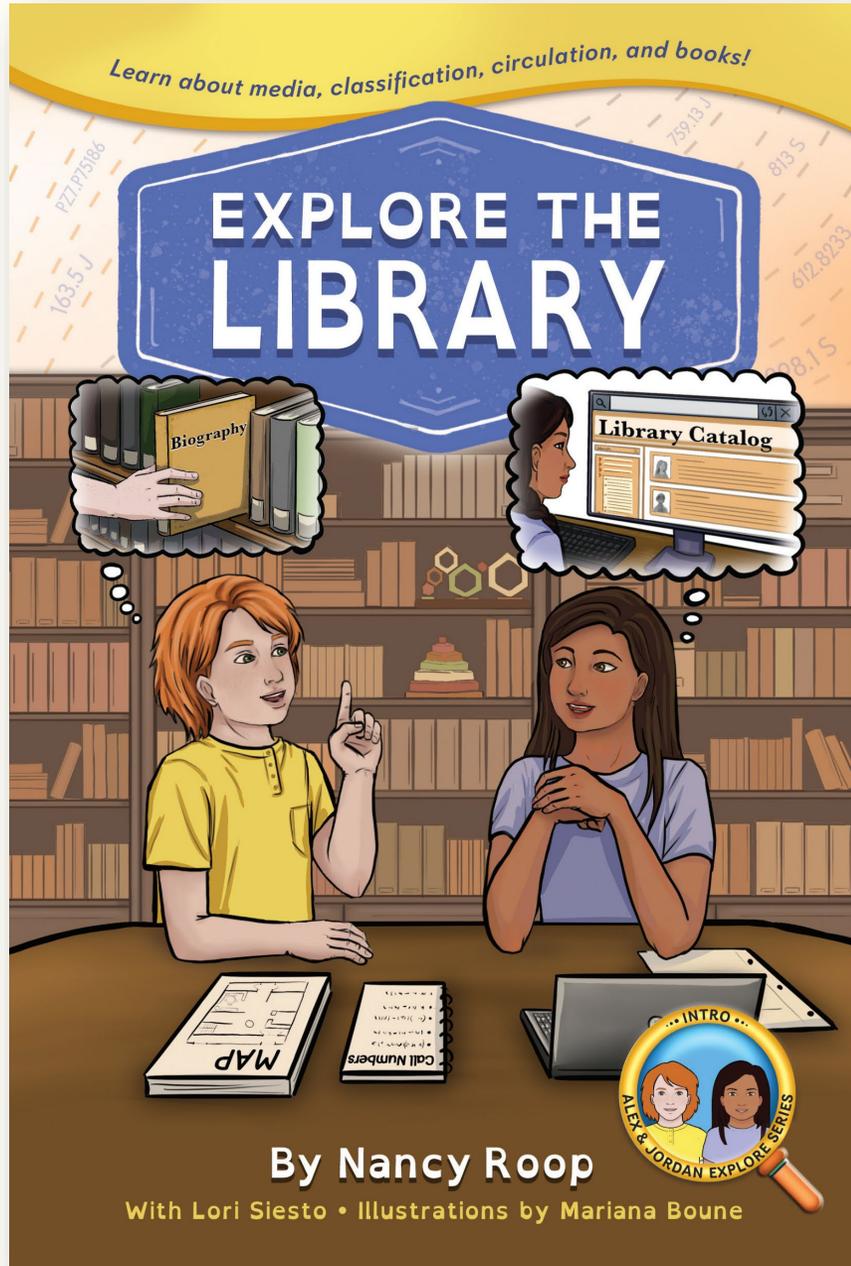
Spanish Edition
Beta Readers needed!

Free book upon publishing

Send an email to:

Nancy@developmentaltexts.com





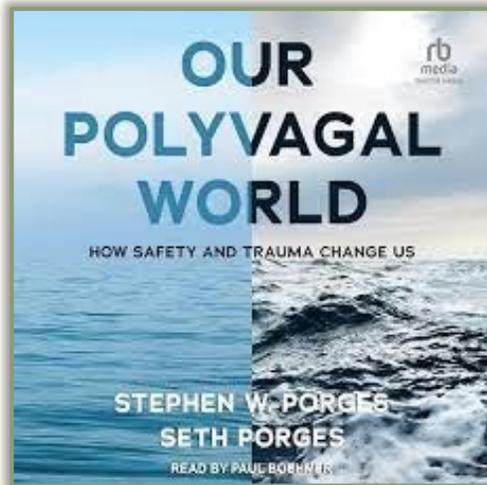
Nancy Roop & Lori Siesto Bryce

Learn about media, classification,
circulation, and books!

Advance reader copy in 2026

Book Joy for Neurodivergent Readers

NANCY ROOP



Agenda



Neurodiversity Affirming & Introduction



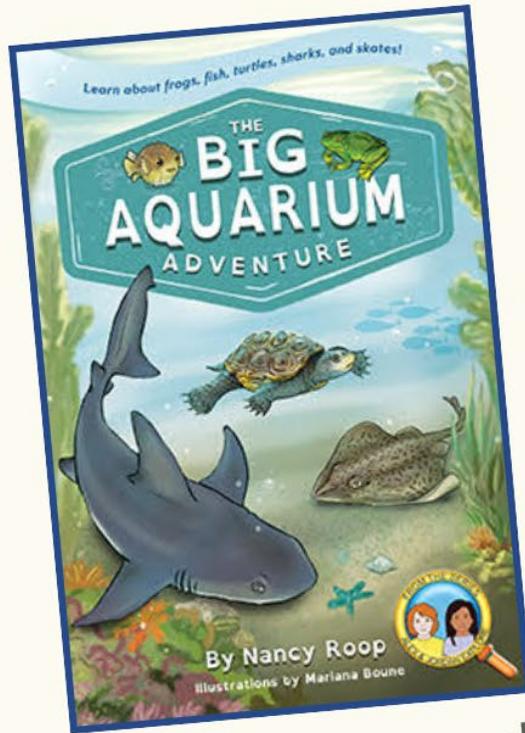
Polyvagal Theory—*think fight or flight*

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Take aways and—*some Glimmers!*

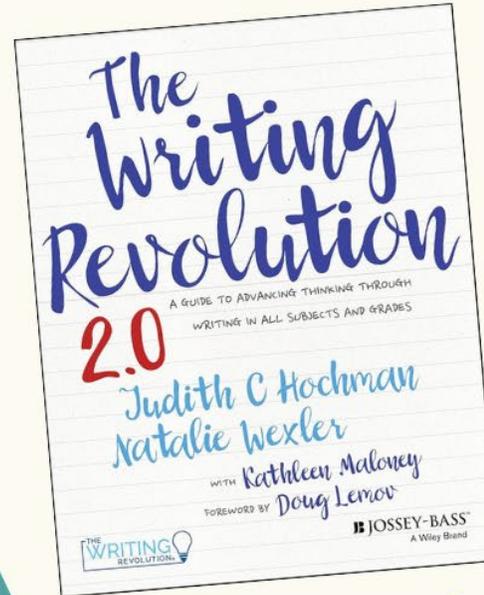
**Winners
choose at
the end!**



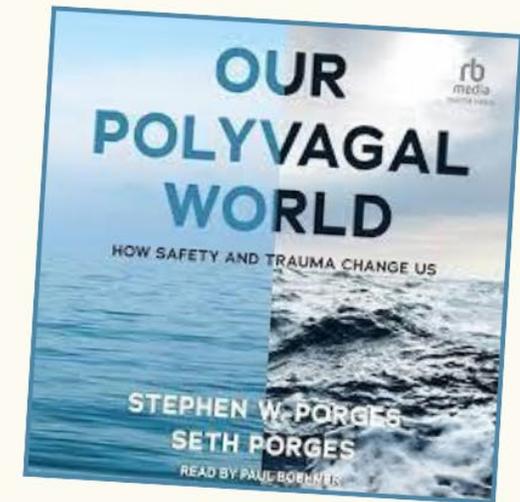
Spiral Bound



Libro.fm
Audiobooks

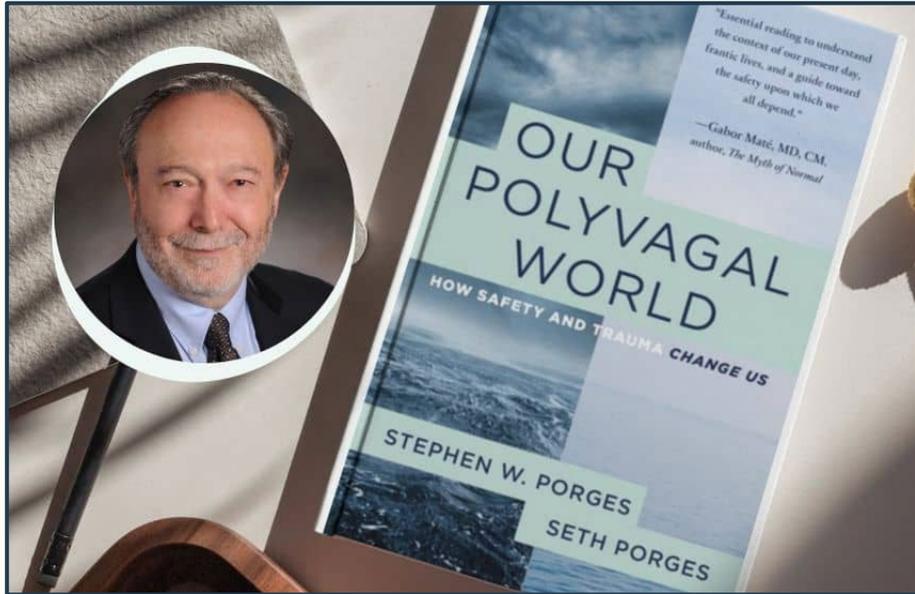


Audiobook



Audiobook

Polyvagal Theory by Stephen Porges



PVI | polyvagal institute

Neuroception: the body's automatic ability

- To assess danger
- Reacts
- to keep us safe
- Attention

Self Regulation:

- A development skill
- Learning varies per person
- Is influenced by the nervous system
- Nervous system can override thinking and feeling





Vagus Nerve

Vagus Nerve
Main Branch

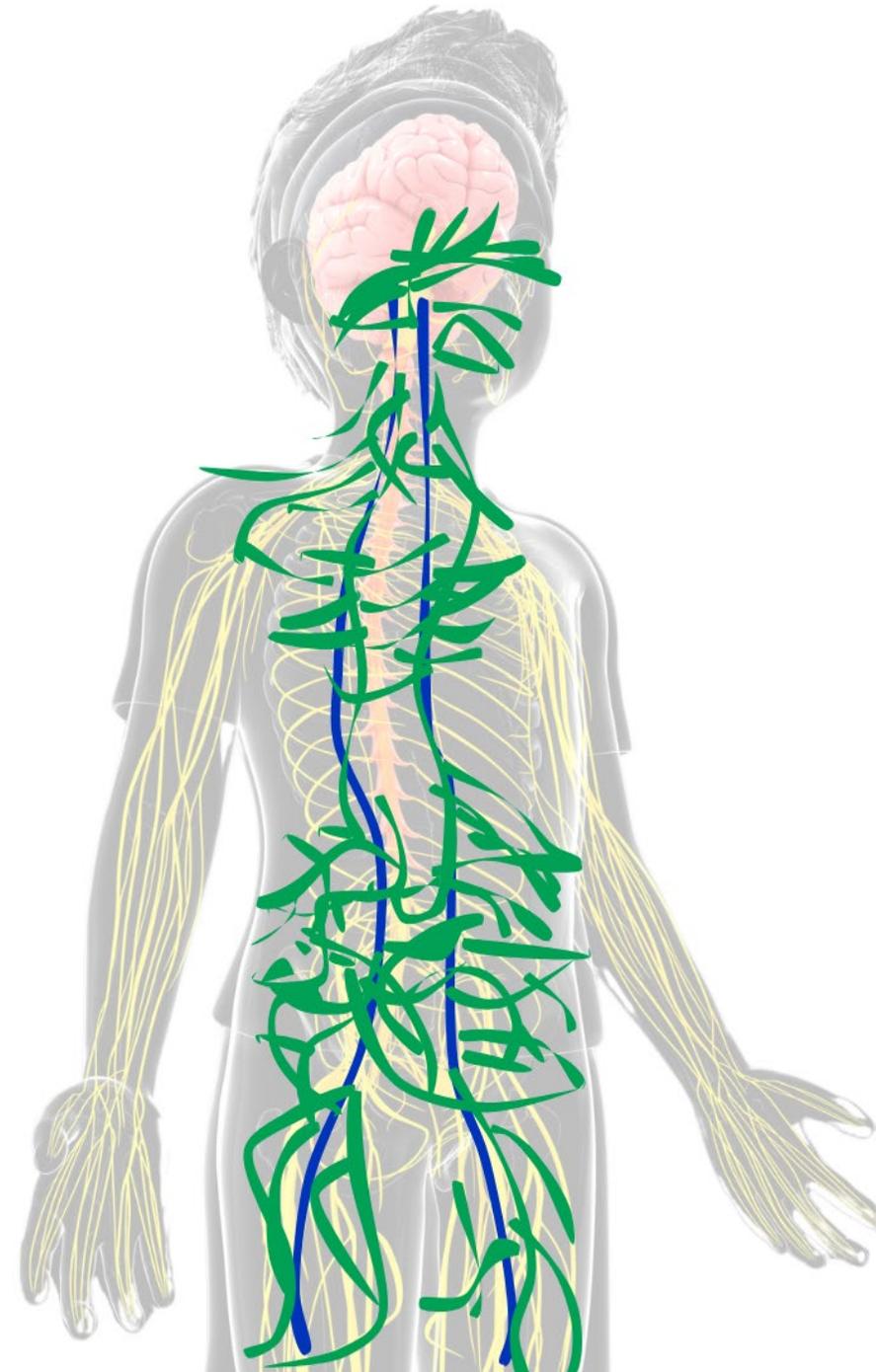
blue

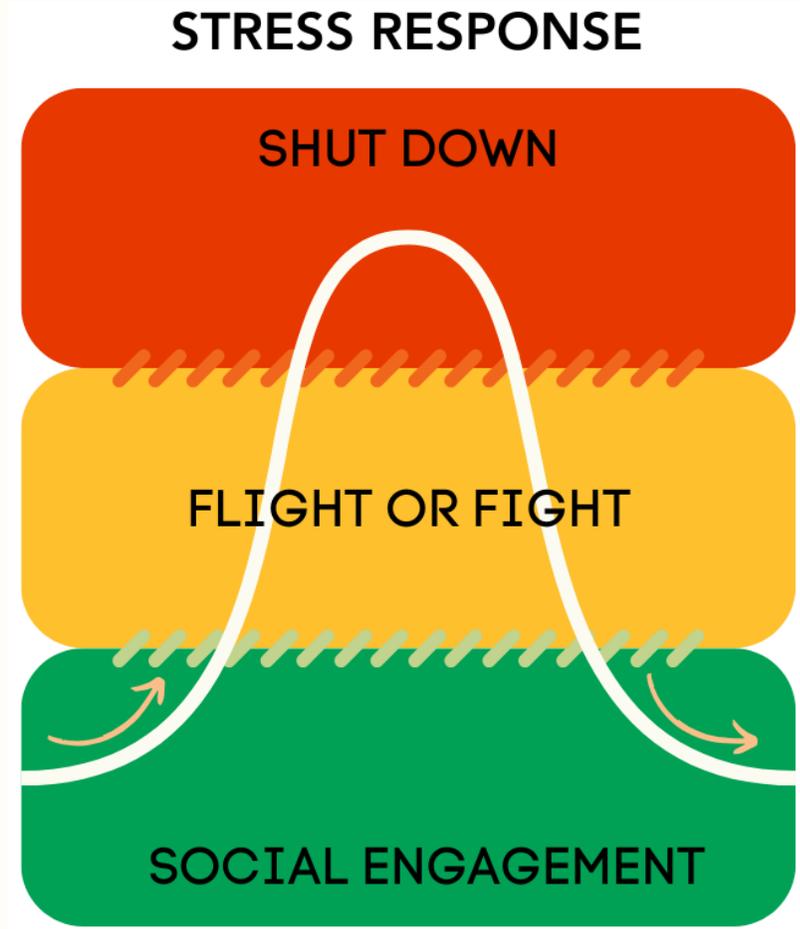
Vagus Nerve
Connections

green

Other
Nerves

yellow





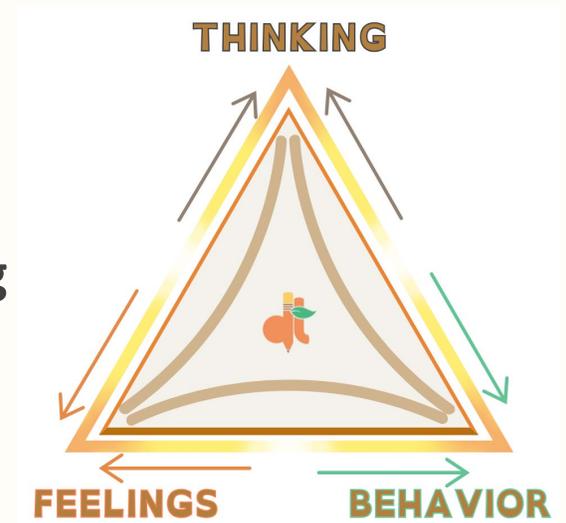
Polyvagal Theory

Physiological state is the sum of:

- Emotions and sensory perceptions
- Ability to manage executive functions
- Carry out the chosen behavior

Must feel safe to maximize thinking

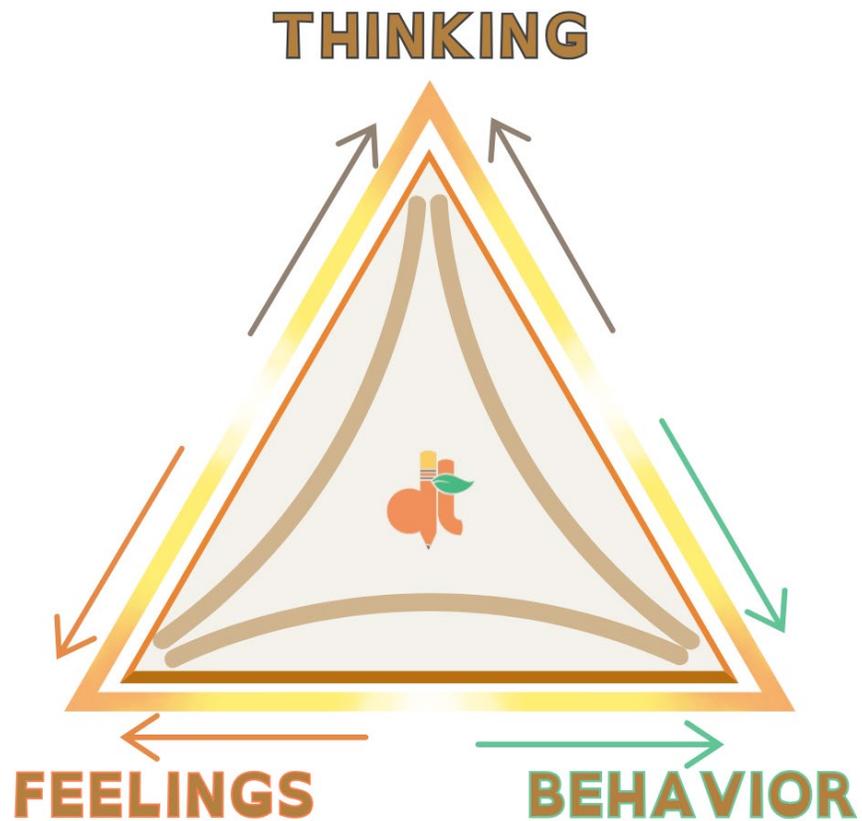
- Environment
- Emotionally
- Physically (sensory)



When feelings and behavior are regulated, learning is possible!



TFB Triad Explained



Thinking

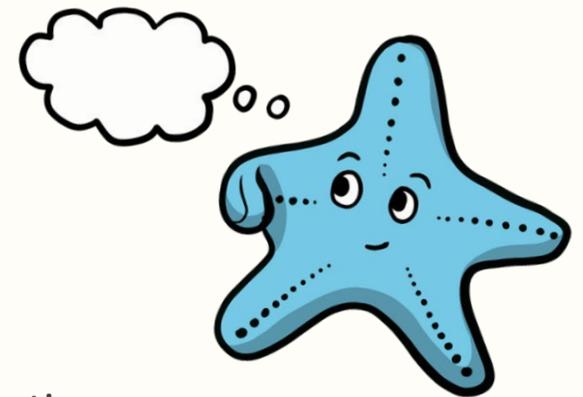
- Executive Functions
- Decisions / choices
- Thoughts about feelings
- Thoughts about behavior
- Learning

Feelings

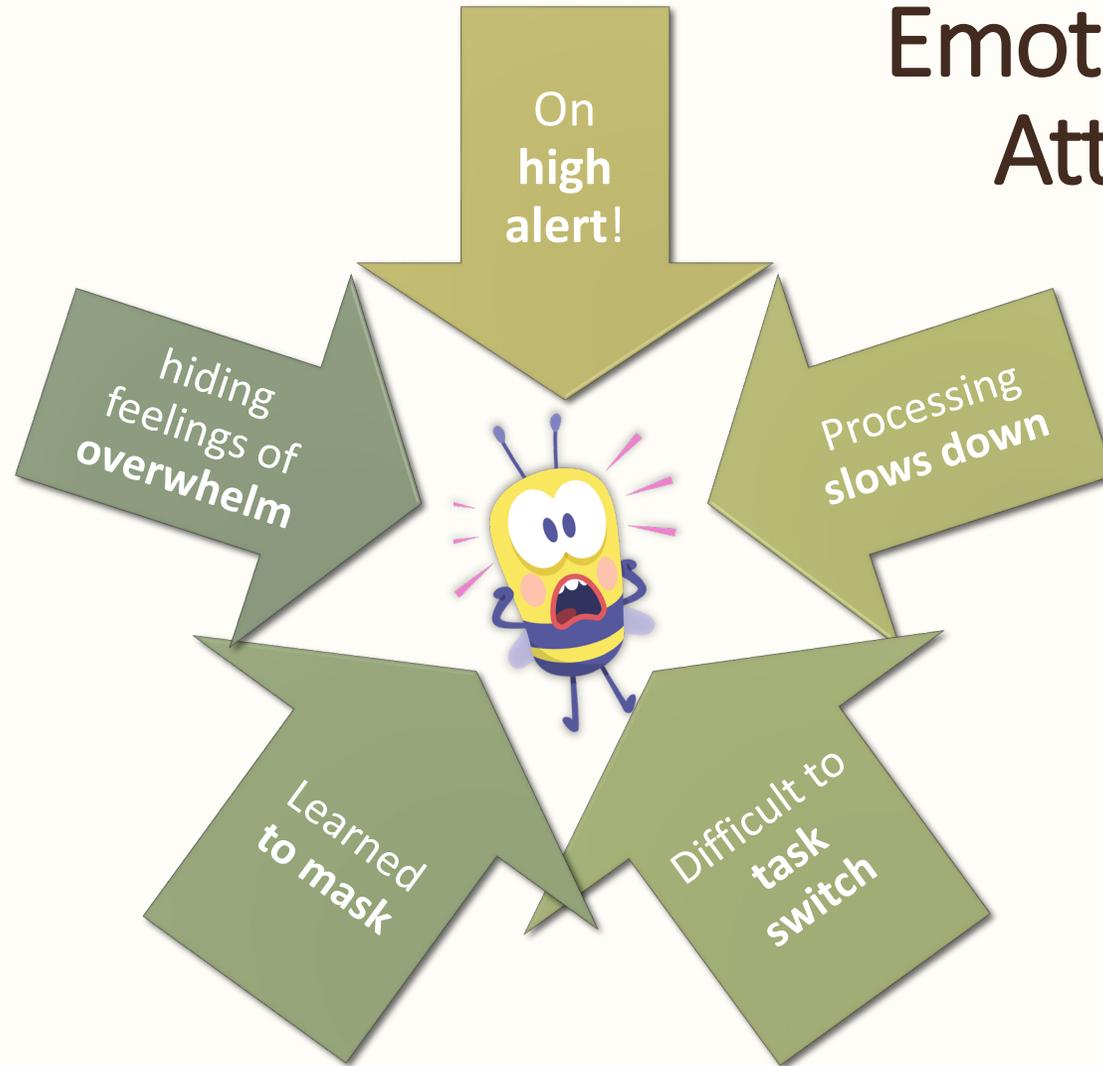
- Physical: internal & external
- Sensory
- Emotional

Behavior

- Physical actions
- Behavior choices in action
- Stress response / impulsive reactions



Emotional Regulation Takes Attention and Energy!



Empathy is our foundation

Understanding and honoring another person's situation, thoughts, and feelings

Check in with a feelings chart

Provides language to what is going on inside

Model desired energy level and manner

Match the energy level to task

“When you are ready...”

Provide explicit directions

If agitated or unable to attend, say

“What will help you feel better?”

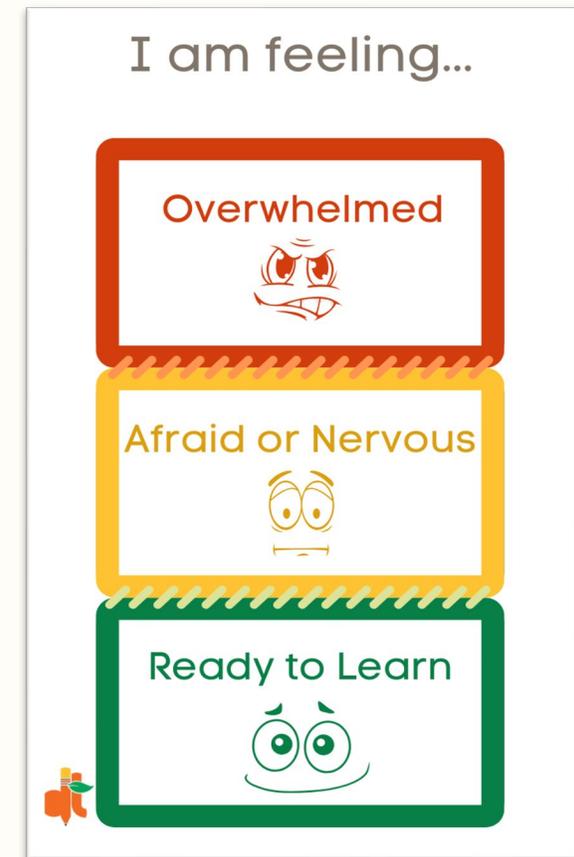
“I can help you get started.”

Offer breaks as needed

“Do you need a break?”



Co-regulation



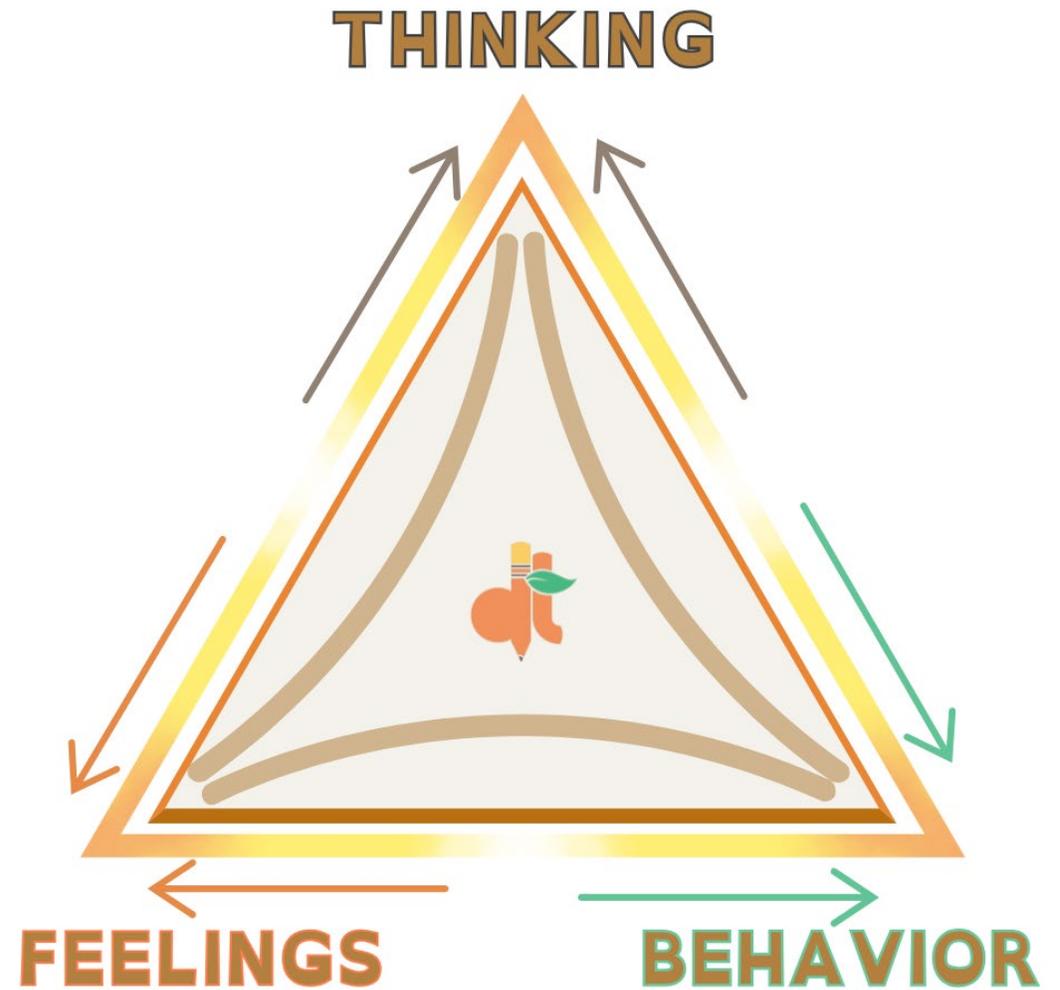
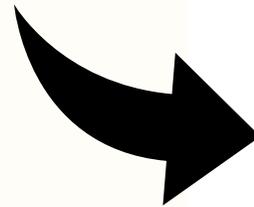


TFB Triad

Improve Sensory Input

based on what an individual needs:

- Thinking is improved
- Behavior is improved



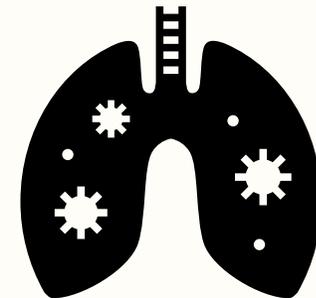
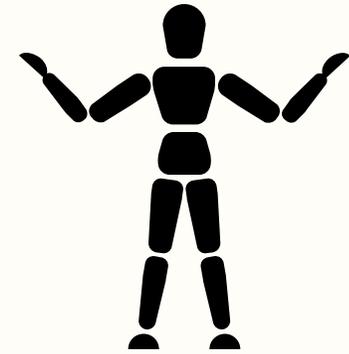
The Eight Sensory Systems

Basic Five: See, hear, smell, taste, and touch
*touch is everywhere on the body

Proprioception is the body's spatial awareness

Vestibular is the motion and balance sense

Interoception is the body's internal awareness





STEPHEN'S QUICK TIP FOR STAYING CALM



When I start to feel too much in my body, I can take deep breaths.

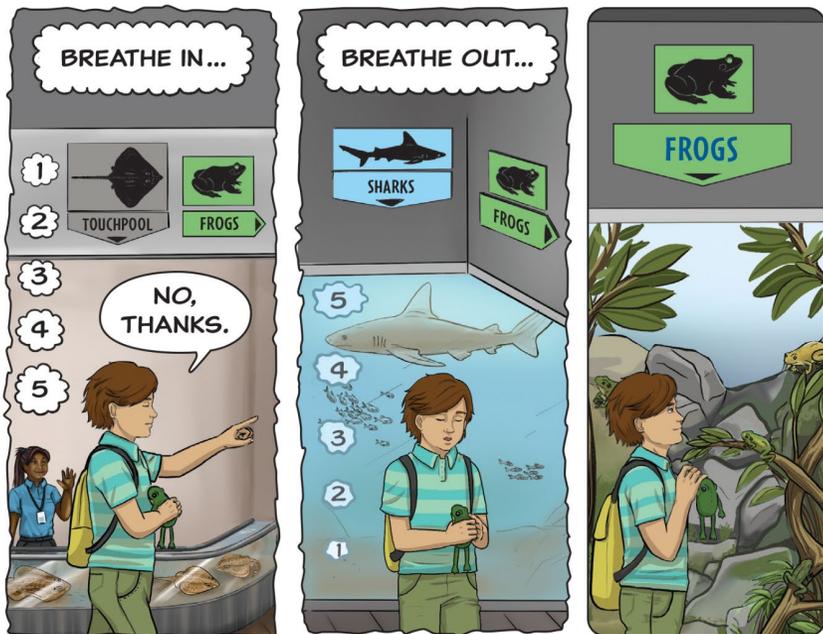
I breathe in with a deep belly-breath and count to five: **1 2 3 4 5**.

I focus on the numbers and remember to go slowly.

Then, I exhale slowly and count backwards from five: **5 4 3 2 1**.

I repeat these two more times.

I look at frogs, squeeze a toy, or listen to music.



Deep Breathing

- Breathing and mindfulness calms the vagus nerve.
- Be sure to practice with students when they are calm.
- Stephen's Quick Tip for Staying Calm is in the handouts.
- Print and laminate.
- Print a poster size for comfort or sensory room.

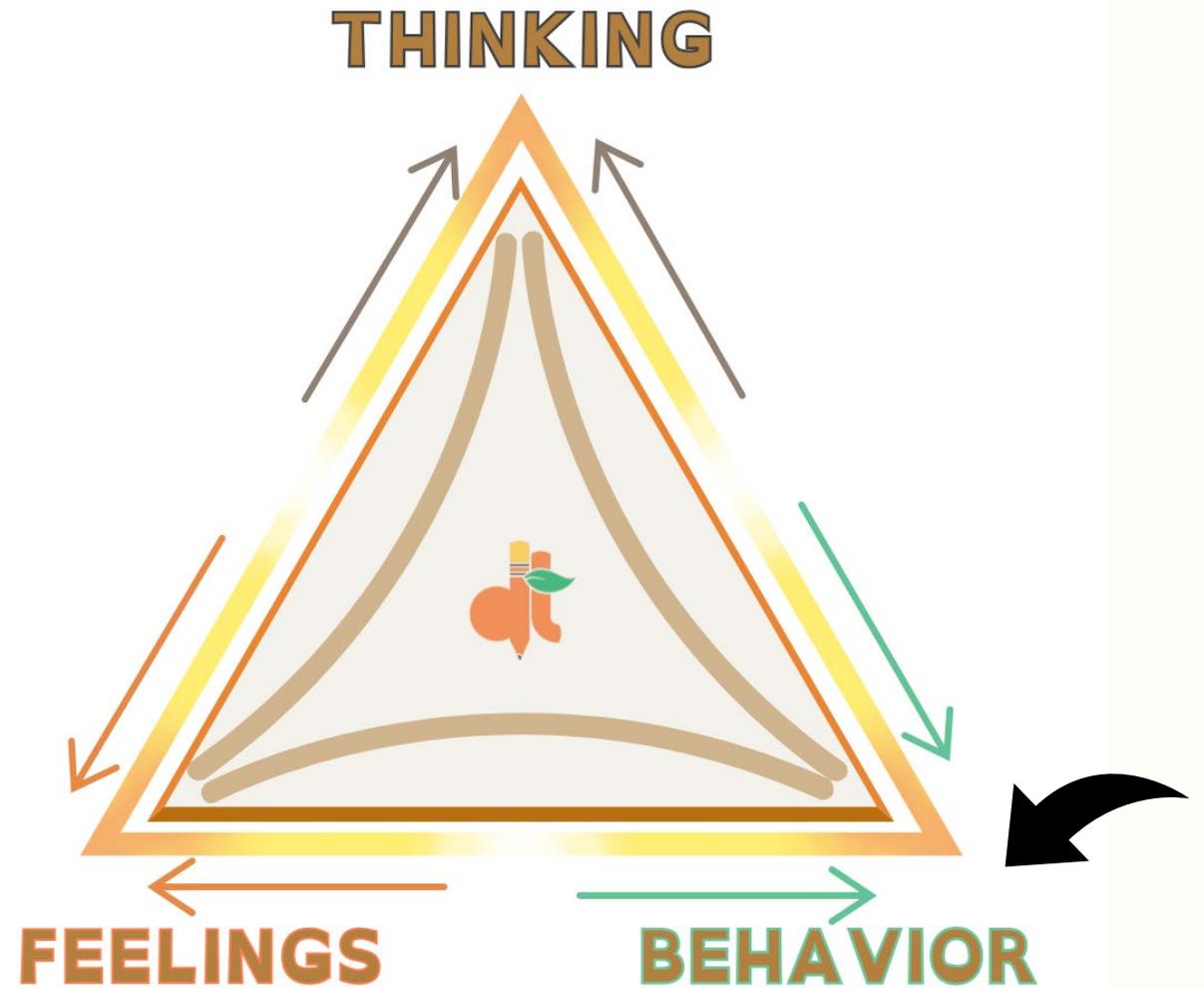


TFB Triad

Change up Behavior

based on what an individual needs:

- Thinking is improved
- Feelings are improved (both sensory and emotional)





Movement

Walking helps regulate the Vagus Nerve

- Bilateral Stimulation
- Cross midline: eyes are sweeping
- Other area with different sensory input

All movement outside is optimal

- Natural sensory input

Occupational therapist prescribed activities

- Activating vs. deactivating



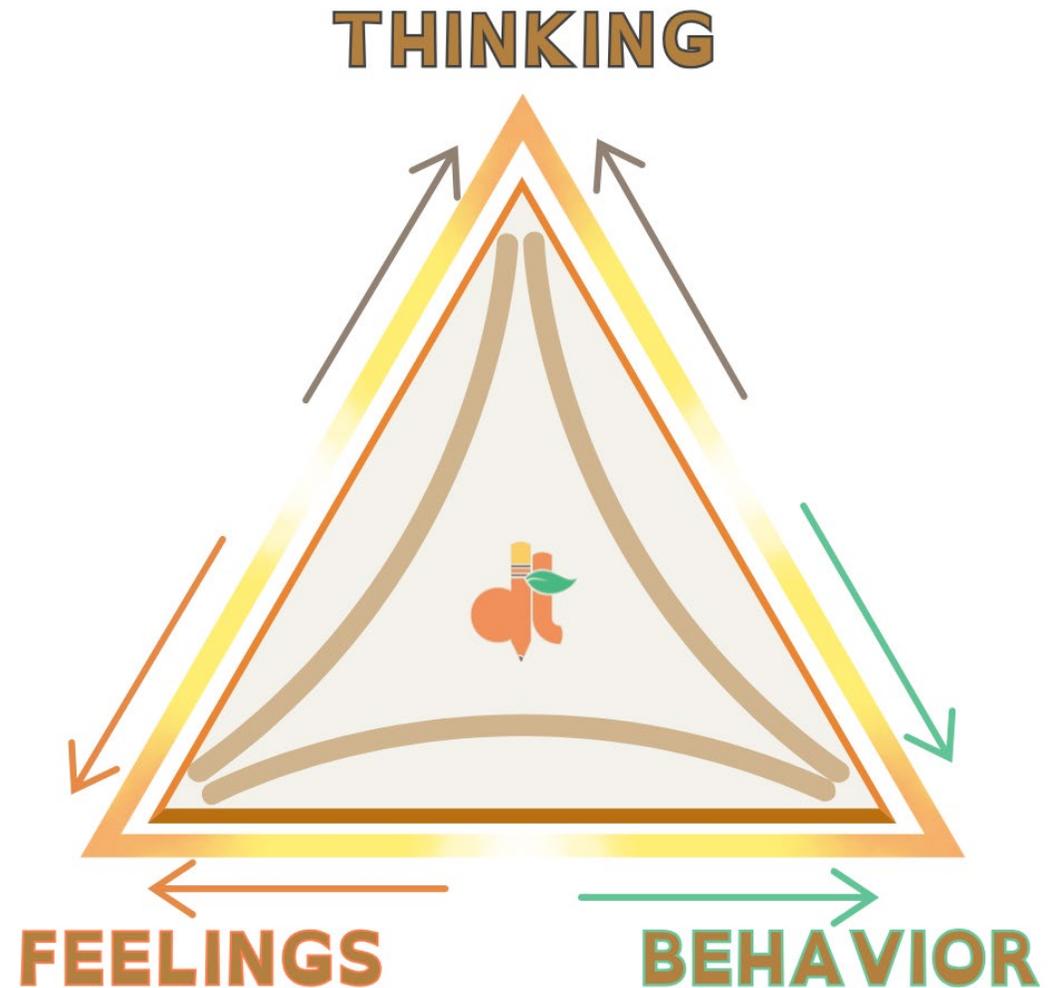
TFB Triad

Change up Thinking



Model Positive self talk:

- Feelings are improved (both sensory and emotional)
- Better able to make good behavior choices





The Power of Visuals

The only part of the autistic brain that is not affected by autism is **visual processing**.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

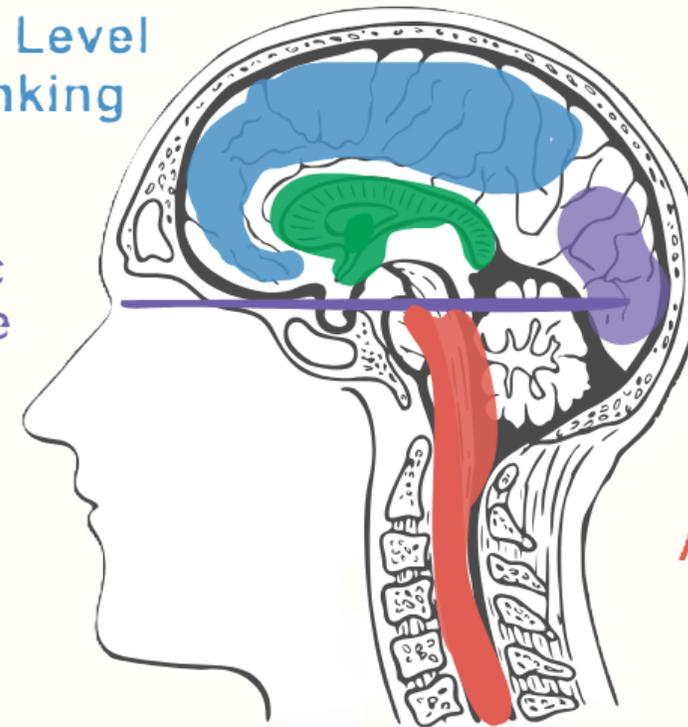
Next: _____



Language takes higher-level processing

High Level Thinking

Optic Nerve



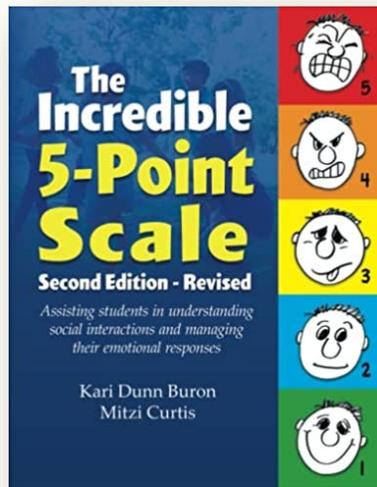
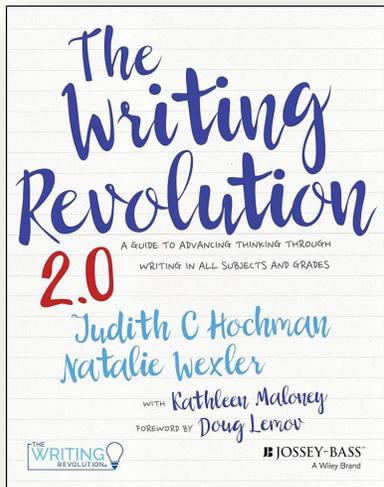
Emotions

Visual Processing

Action

Book Joy for Neurodivergent Readers

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Safiy



Student Profile: Safiy

Fourth Grader

Likes to play with sensory toys

Hesitant with everything new

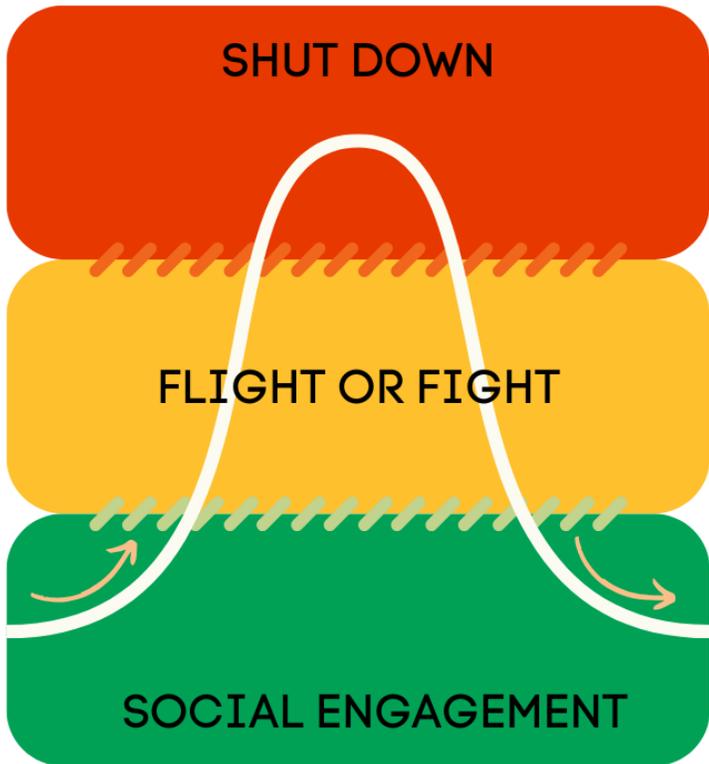
Easily overwhelmed

Reading level: first grade

CPTSD due to unstable home

Level three autism

STRESS RESPONSE



Often hovers near red

- Body feels trauma
- Transitions are hard

Is seldom in green

- Routine schedule
- Favorite activities

Needs extra time to process

- Finish scripting and routines
- Needs to work on one goal at a time.

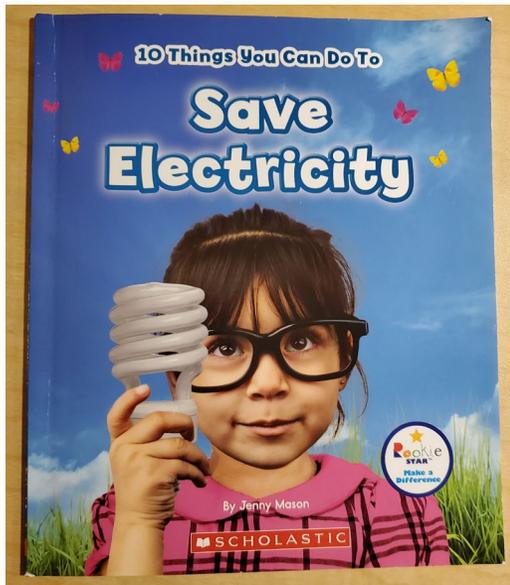
Safiy needs an educator who is patient and empathetic.



Book Features for Reluctant Readers



1. Match sensory needs of book to reader
2. Accessible: rounded font on white paper
3. Systematic organization is predictable
4. Avoid figurative language; complex social situations
5. Nonfiction; or real & relatable stories
6. Books in a series are predictable and familiar
7. Graphic novels: pictures are processed differently
8. Repeated readings allow familiarity



Introduction

The refrigerator chills your food. The game station powers your video games. A lightbulb shines on your homework. All of these devices use electricity. To make electricity, we mostly burn coal, oil, or trees. But these fuels are running out. Plus, they **pollute** the air and hurt our planet. The good news is that you can help! There are many ways you can save electricity.

4 5

6 Save Water to Save Electricity

Water treatment plants bring clean water to your house. They need a lot of electricity to do that. When you use less water, the treatment plants use less electricity. Shut off the faucet when you brush your teeth. See who can take the fastest shower in your family.

Electricity that comes from rivers, waterfalls, and dams (like the one pictured) is called hydropower. Hydropower makes 85 percent of all clean energy around the world.

16 17



Chapter 1

Leaf Shapes

fern pine grass

Fun Fact
An oak tree can have more than a million leaves!

A leaf is a part of a plant. Trees are plants. Different kinds of trees have different leaves.

4 5

Fun Fact
Ginkgo trees grew on Earth long, long ago. Dinosaurs ate the leaves of ginkgo trees.

ginkgo

linden

poplar

white willow

sweet gum

sassafras

holly

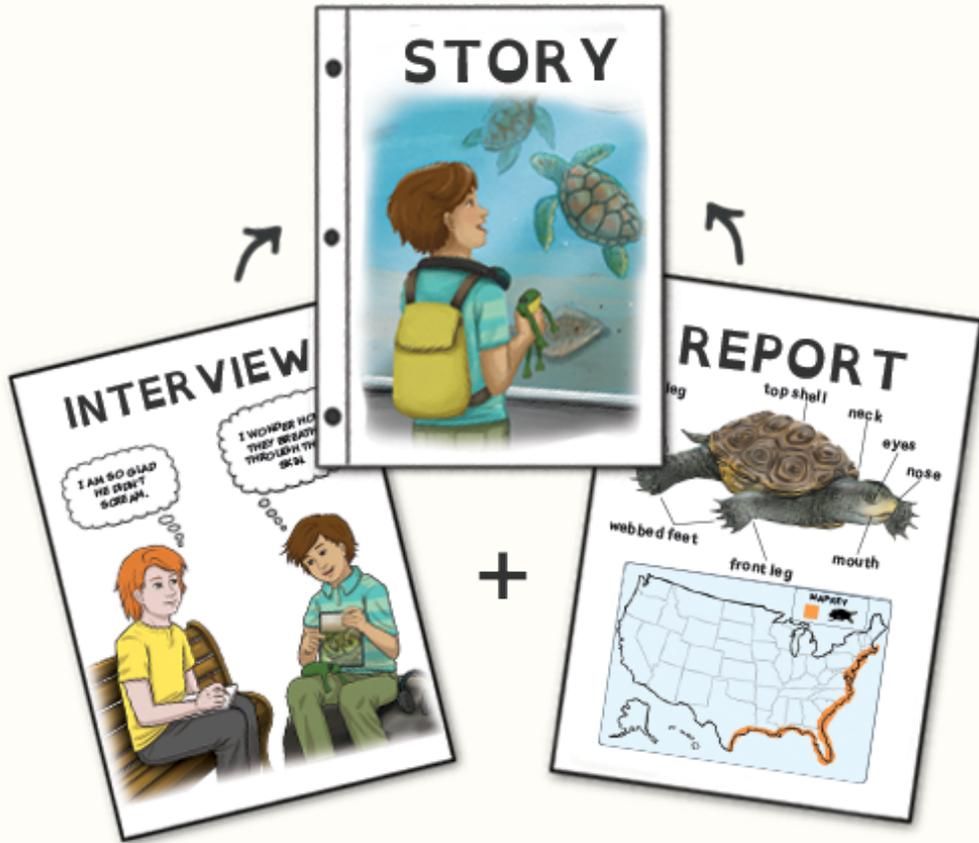
Some trees have leaves that look like stars. Some trees have leaves that look like feathers or fans.

Some trees have leaves that look like hearts. What other leaf shapes do you see?

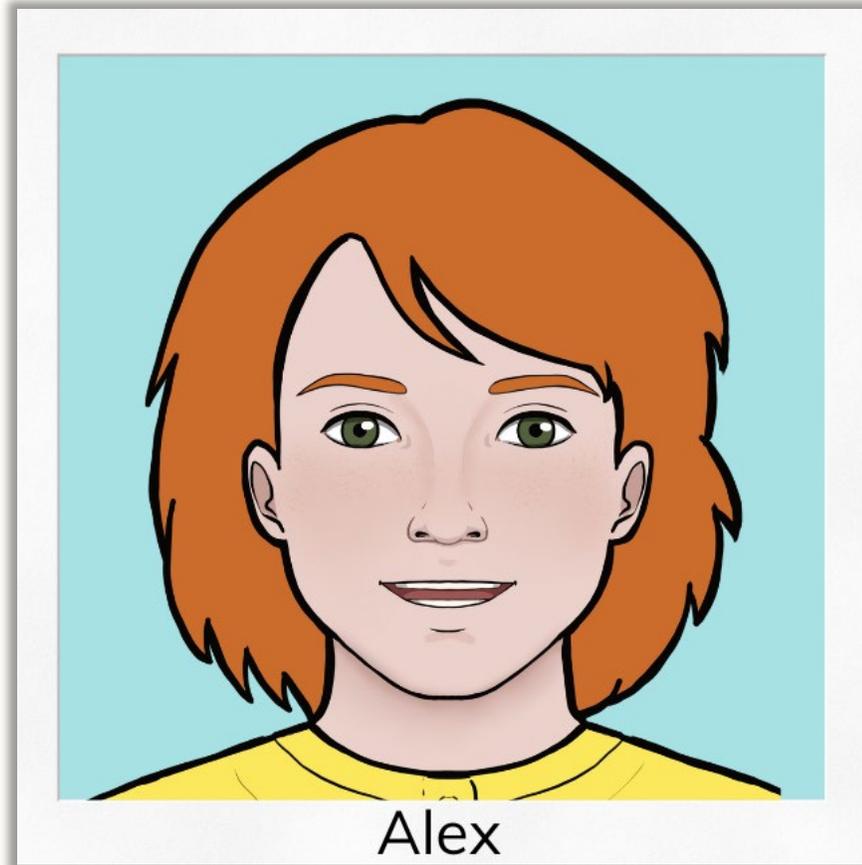
6 7



Book Features for Reluctant Readers



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Student Profile: Alex

Fifth Grader

Likes to ask questions

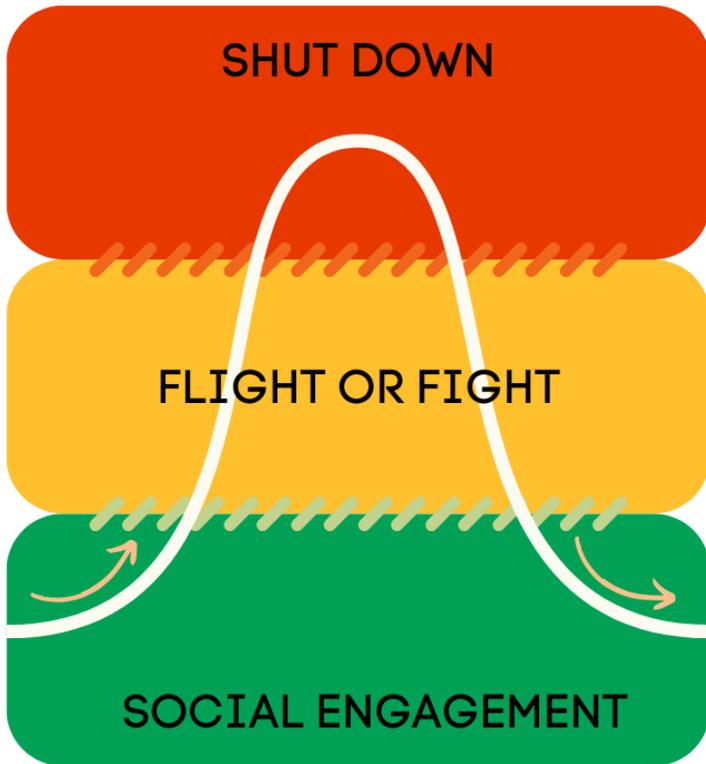
Hyperactive body and mind

Reading level: third grade

Social and emotional delay

Dysgraphia

STRESS RESPONSE



Often in green

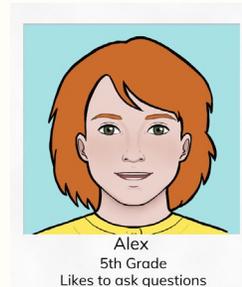
- Very social
- Has agency over sensory needs

Goes up to yellow quickly

- High demands
- Task switching too fast

Demands continue

- Escalates into red
- 20 minutes until de-escalation



Alex stays on alert due to cortisol for the rest of the day!



The Hochman Method

The Writing Revolution 2.0

A guide to advancing thinking through writing in all subjects and grades

By: Judith C. Hochman
Natalie Wexler

Who ?

What ?

When ?

Where ?

Why ?

How ?



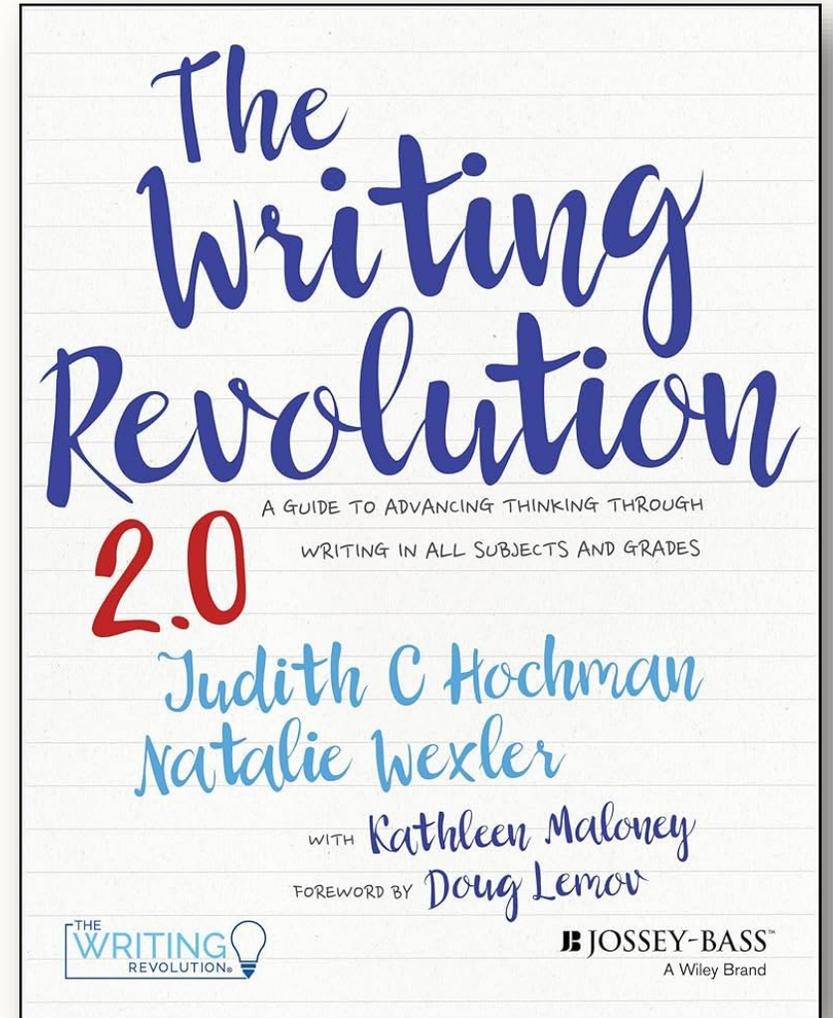
The Writing Revolution

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Strategies start with a kernel sentence, then expand to complex.

Poster available at

thewritingrevolution.org





Reading Journal Templates

Support Reading Comprehension

1. Read a book 2-3 days in a row
2. Complete a template after each Subject/verb page creates kernel

Who or What does or is

Description page expands on

When, Where, Why, or How

Put pages in a binder

3. Master each template with 10-20 repetitions before moving to next

Name: _____ **Who** Date: _____

I read _____

who	does or is
-----	------------

Draw a picture

Write a sentence

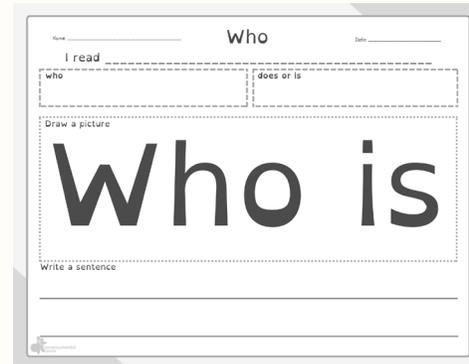
developmental texts



Reading Journal Templates for Teaching Writing Strategies

Combine sentences from two + templates
with writing strategies:

1. Subject/verb page
Who or What
2. Description page
When, Where, Why, or How
3. Compound sentence with appositives,
conjunctions, transitions, and
dependent clauses



Name _____ Date _____

I read _____

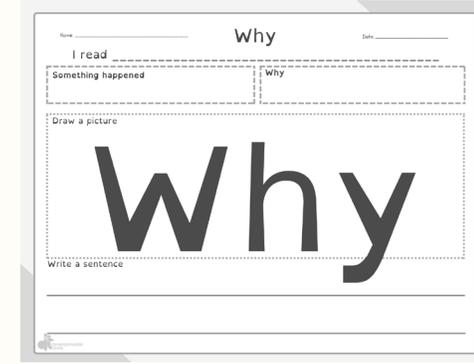
who _____ does or is _____

Draw a picture

Who is

Write a sentence

because



Name _____ Date _____

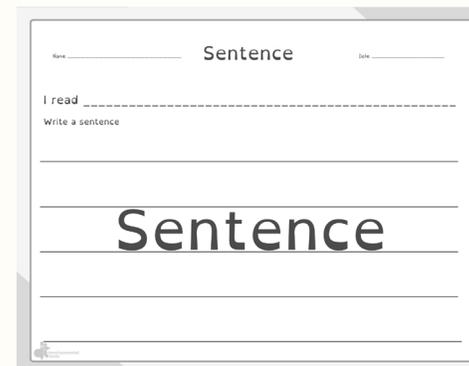
I read _____

Something happened _____ Why _____

Draw a picture

Why

Write a sentence

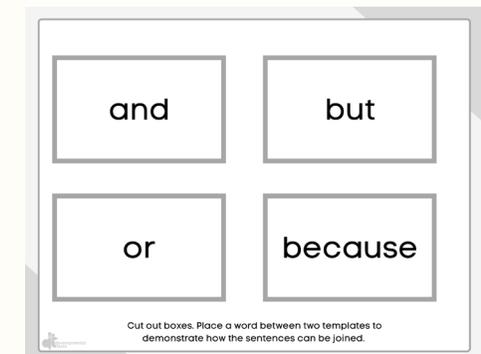


Name _____ Date _____

I read _____

Write a sentence

Sentence



and but

or because

Cut out boxes. Place a word between two templates to demonstrate how the sentences can be joined.

Use templates to organize information across all subject lessons.



Student-led Bookmaking

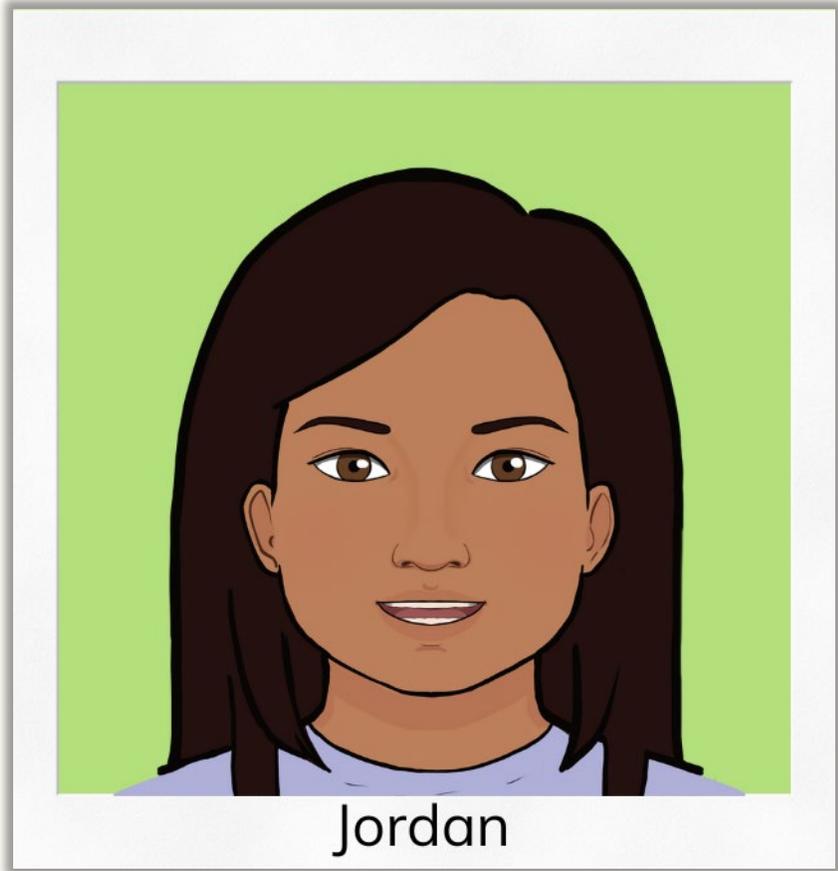
**Use topics of interest or common items at school.
Use a binder, lined paper, and plain white paper**

Create a picture book—one page a day

1. Write a word, phrase, or a sentence on lined paper
2. Draw an illustration on plain paper
3. Put pages in binder
4. Read the book after new pages are added
5. Create cover page when book is complete.

Scaffold as needed: sentence choices or outline illustration





Student Profile: Jordan

Fifth Grader

Likes to do research projects

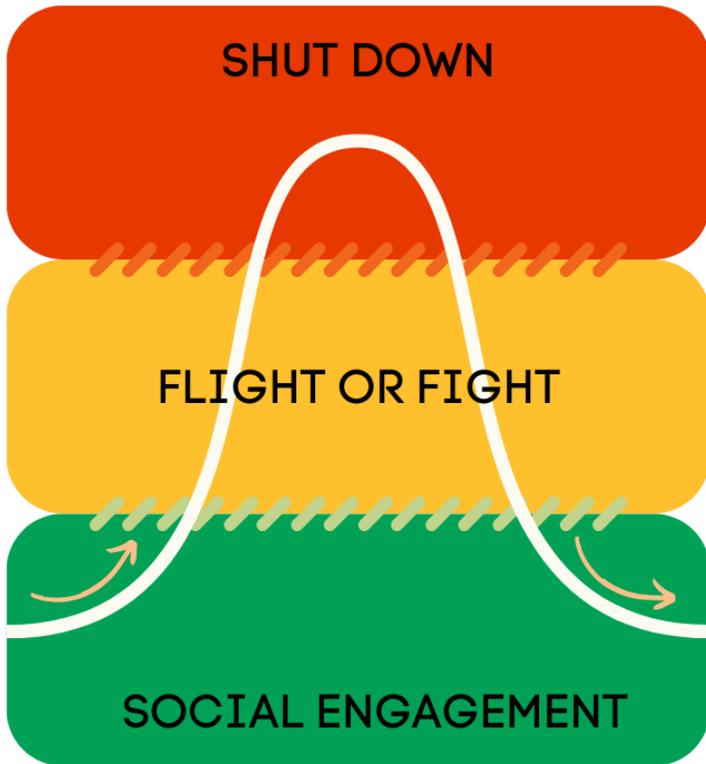
Gifted

Reading level: eighth grade

Social and emotional delay

ASD and A.D.H.D

STRESS RESPONSE



Jordan

Often in yellow

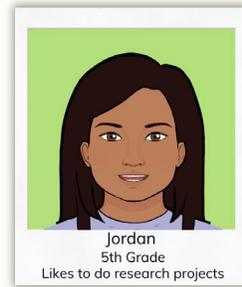
- But appears to be in green
- She masks her anxiety

Goes up to red slowly

- Works hard to not escalate
- She cannot learn in this state
- Starts to show agitation

Loses control

- Short period of time
- Tends to blow up after getting home



Jordan benefits from taking breaks and draws pictures.



Sensory Regulation and Learning



Environment:

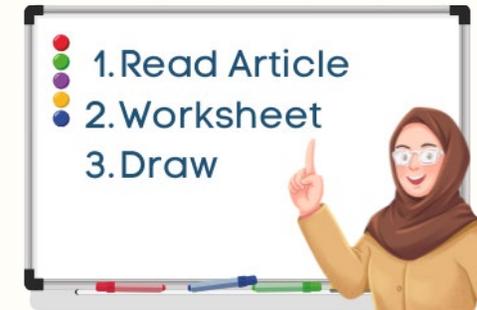
- Designated quiet or comfy areas
- Reduce visual stimulation

Promote self-regulation

- Provide headphones and fidgets
- “When you are ready...”

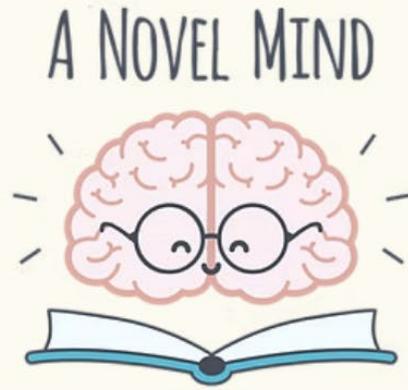
Explicit directions

- Pause frequently
- Written on the board

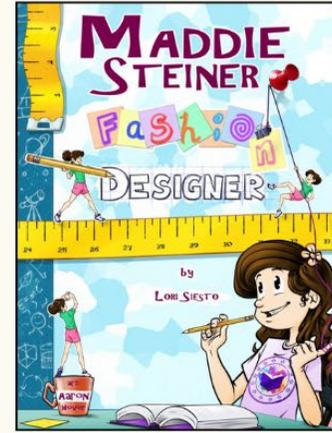


1. Read Article
2. Worksheet
3. Draw

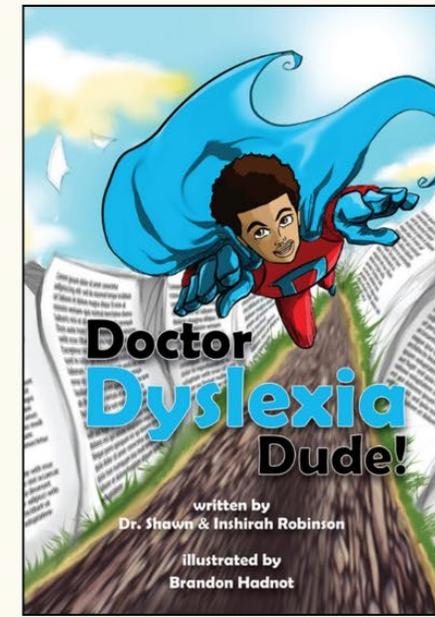
NEURODIVERSE INCLUSIVE BOOKS



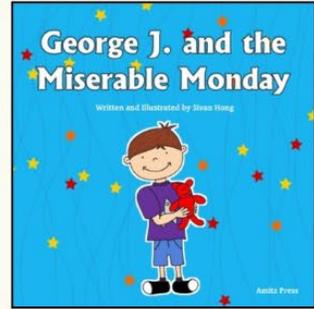
anovelmind.com



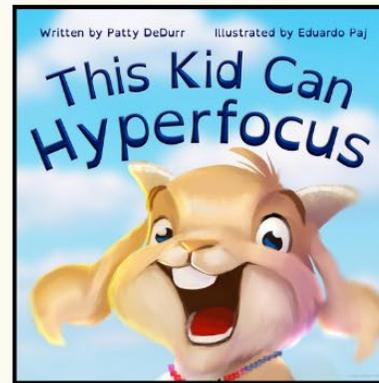
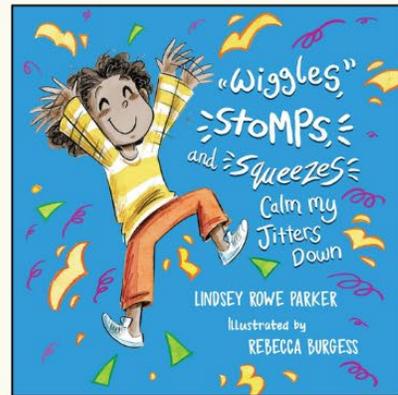
#ASDAuthor



#DyslexiaAuthor



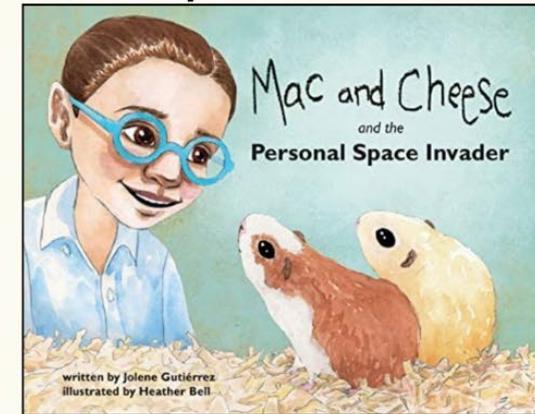
#SPDAuthor



#ADHDAuthor



#AACAuthor

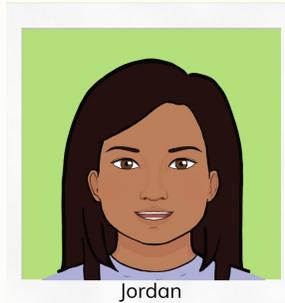


#proprioceptionauthor



Safiy

Pause and Think About Your Readers

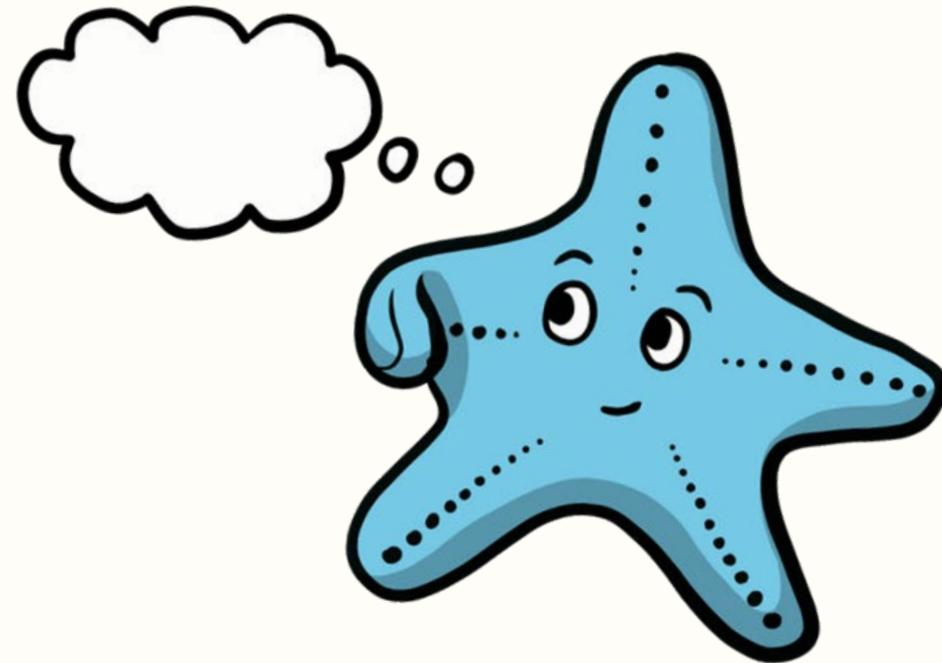


Jordan

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
Next: _____



Alex





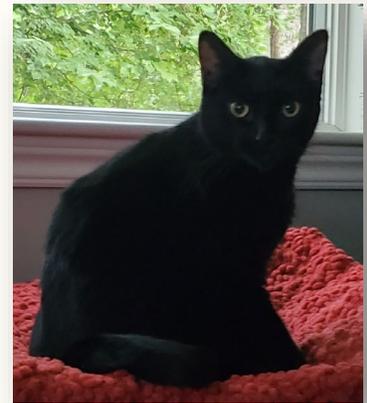
Quick Tip from our Pets!



Stephen Porges says: Brains are naturally wired to focus on negative thoughts to keep us safe. Modern brains haven't evolved, yet.



Deb Dana says: **Glimmers are micro-moments of regulation that foster feelings of well-being.**



Use **good** gossip!
Positive narration
Mindfulness
Affirmations

Book Joy for Neurodivergent Readers

NANCY ROOP



Take Back to Class
Accommodation Guide

Student Led: use favorite topics & characters.

Audiobooks and read alouds: listen then create three action pictures from the story.

Paras can scribe for a student so they can get their ideas down with less frustration.

Reduce the number of multiple choice answers to two.

Give the answer key of the review sheets to students with blanks for them to copy one or more words based on their level. Or they can use a highlighter to highlight the answer already given which allows the review the correct information!

**Empathy, compassion,
and patience are key!**



- ✓ Neurodiversity Affirming Introduction
- ✓ Polyvagal Theory—*think fight or flight*
- ✓ Three Neurodivergent Readers
- Accommodations
- Take aways and—*some Glimmers!*



Accommodation Toolkit to supports Executive Functions

Organization

Planning

Task Initiation

Working Memory

Impulse Control

Emotional Control

Self Monitoring

Flexible Thinking



Take Back to Class Accommodation Guide

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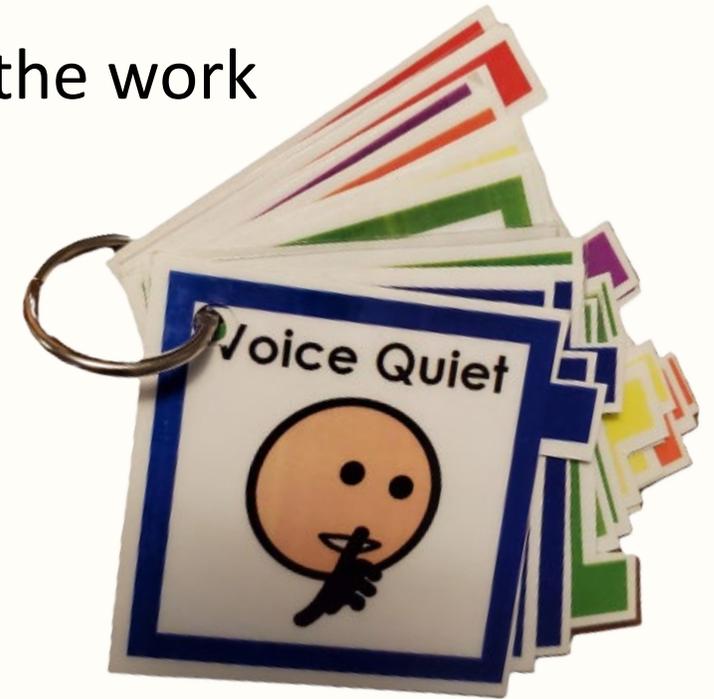
**Empathy, compassion,
and patience are key!**





Reducing Executive Functions

1. Identify the learning objective
2. Identify executive functions to complete the work
3. Make a change to the number of tasks or functions
4. Create Routines
5. Use visual cues or lists
 - Vision is processed easier than hearing





Scaffolding

1. Include word banks
2. Detective questions: use page number clues
3. Add color to worksheets
 - Increases interest
 - Use color-coding to give clues to the answers.
4. Review sheet: provide answer keys
5. Reduce the number of multiple choice to two
6. Para scribes for student in notebook
 - Taking notes of teacher's lesson
 - Brainstorming ideas and sentence creation

Use a word bank.

Color code with lines or dots.

Use same colors consistently.



frog fish turtle shark skate

1. What animal is Stephen's favorite? _____ (p. 13)
2. What was too scary for Stephen? _____ (p. 21)
3. What animal helped Stephen feel calm? _____ (p. 81)

DIRECTIONS: which word tells...

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

aquariums	●	where	carefully	●
turtles	●	what	last summer	●
slowly	●		inside	●
the tank	●		Alex	●
Jordan	●		sandbar	●

DIRECTIONS: expand the sentence.

He walked to the frogs.

Who? _____ Stephen

When? _____ he felt scared

Where? _____ at the Aquarium, or The Big Aquarium

Stephen walked to the frogs when he felt scared at the aquarium.



Timer Slide Shows

USE A SLIDE DECK TO PROVIDE TIMERS

1. Students can relax and not wonder about time
2. Kids walking into the room know what is happening
3. Systematic organization is predictable and supports self-regulation



What's in a Year-Long Library Plan for Special Education Classes?



Angela Durham

B.S.B.A. M.L.I.S.
Ph.D. Candidate
University of South Carolina

Read Alouds with Kinesthetic activities:

hand gestures, body movement, or songs.

- *Goin' on a Bear Hunt*
- *The Wheels on the Bus*
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*
- *I Want Slop*

<https://schoollibraryconnection.com/>





Environment

IS YOUR SPACE INCLUSIVE AND NEUROAFFIRMING?



Supportive Adults



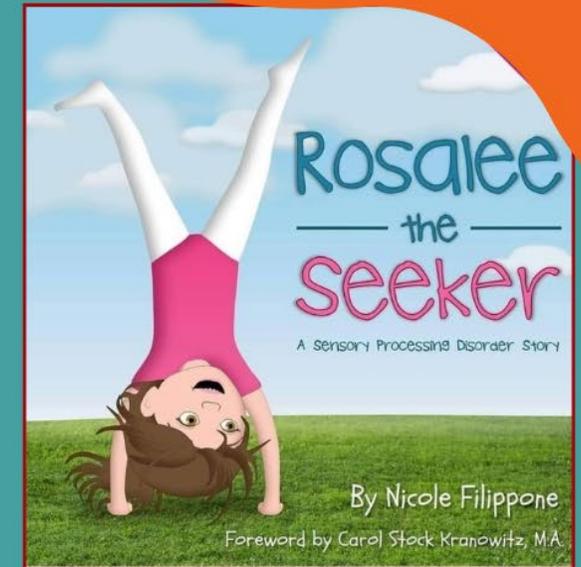
Visual Aides



Breaks



Repetition



Books for ND

Book Joy for Neurodivergent Readers



Agenda

- ✓ Neurodiversity Affirming & Introduction
- ✓ Polyvagal Theory—*think fight or flight*
- ✓ Three Neurodivergent Readers
- ✓ Accommodations
- ✓ Take aways and—*some Glimmers!*



Resources Available to You!

Nancy@DevelopmentalTexts.com

Sign up for my occasional newsletter

- Quick Tips for ND Readers
- Advance reader copies of new books

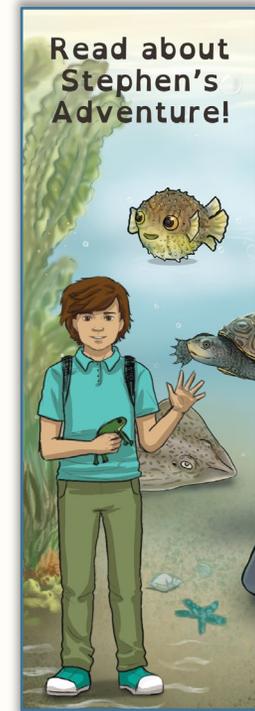
Access Slide Deck, Accommodation Guide and More!

- nancyroop.com/resources

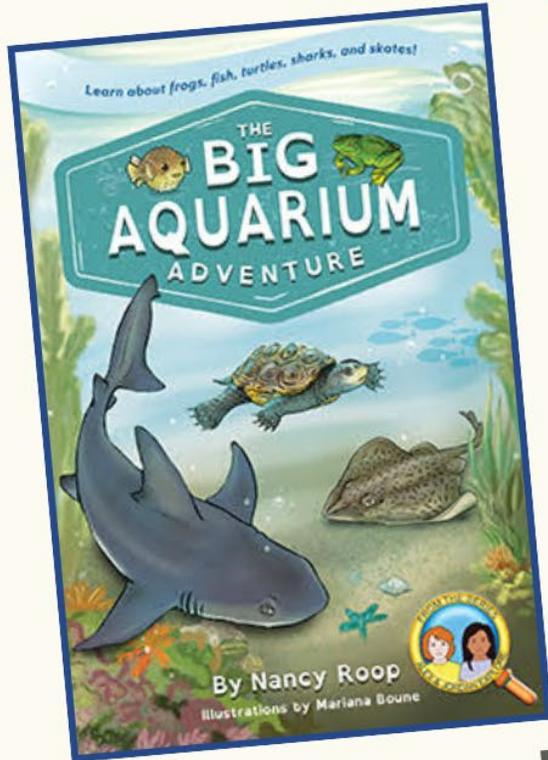
Nancyroop.com/blog

[@developmental_texts](https://www.instagram.com/developmental_texts)

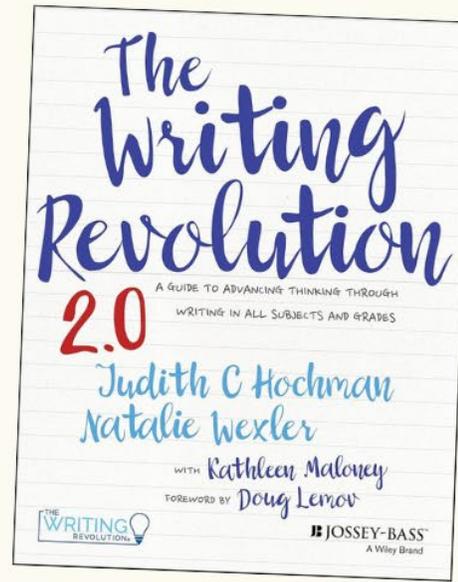
Thank you for being here!



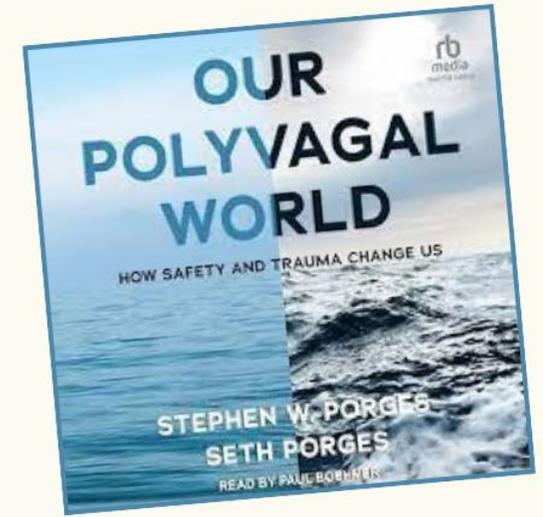
**Winners
choose
at the
end!**



Spiral Bound



Audiobook



Audiobook

**SECOND
CHANCE
DRAWING**

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1 credit



We are all Different



Neurodiversity Affirming

- Presume competence
- Promote autonomy
- Respect all communication styles
- Strength's base approach
- Tailor supports to individual needs

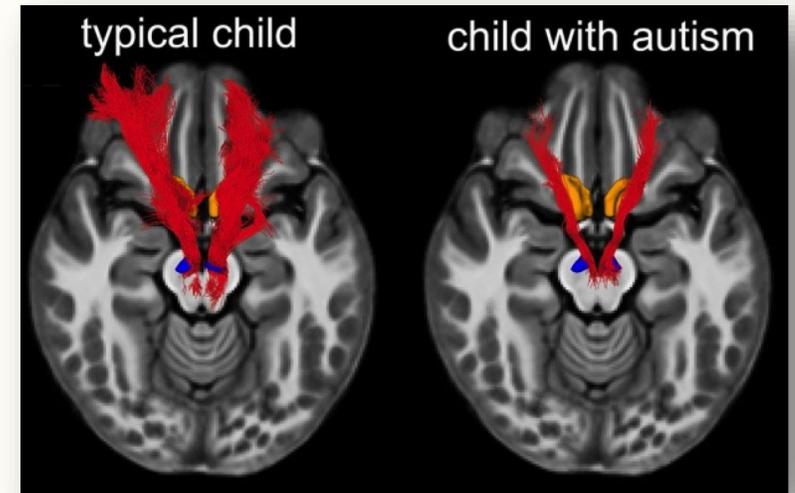




Language Delays and Comprehension

“It is perhaps not surprising that children with poor speech and language have problems with literacy.”

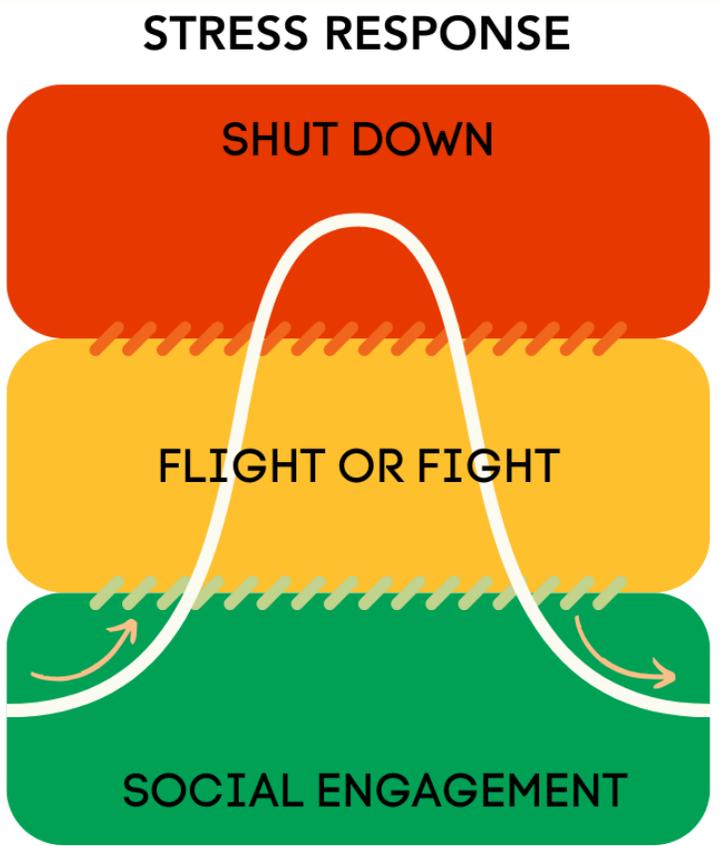
Nation et al 2004



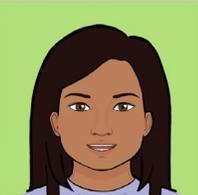
Most neurodivergent youth have language differences:

Autism, ADHD, Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, PTSD, CPTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, Anxiety disorders, Other Learning Disabilities

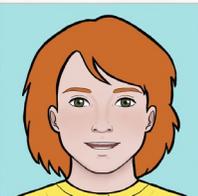
Pause and Think About Your Student



Safiy



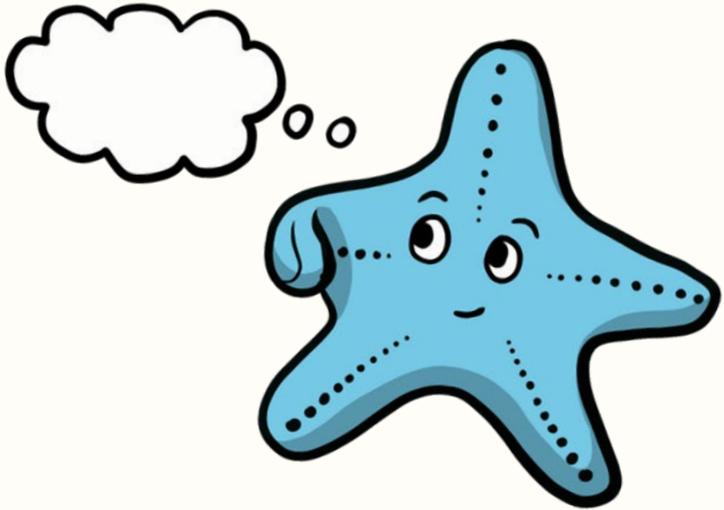
Jordan



Alex

What color(s) match your student?

Think about co-regulating with them!





Moving from Book Trauma to Book Joy with Empathy!



“If a child with ASD is put in a learning situation that they don’t understand, it is likely to produce anxiety which interrupts their ability to attend and learn.

Frustration and anxiety may cause negative behaviors such as inattentiveness, acting out, and an increase in ritualistic behavior.”

Developmental Texts for Students with Autism;
a Safe Space in the Written World.

Nancy Roop, Undergraduate Thesis, 2020

Meet your

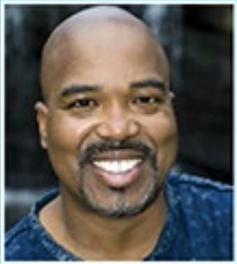
ibpa DEI Committee



Wiley Barnes



Ian Henzel



Troy Johnson



Priya Kumari



Dr. Pinky



Nancy Roop



Sara Thaxton



Kirk Whisler

IBPA remains unwavering in its commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within its leadership, policies, practices, publications, programs, and membership.



The Roop Method



Easiest content standard in chunks of 2-3 days

Capitalizes on familiarity and routines

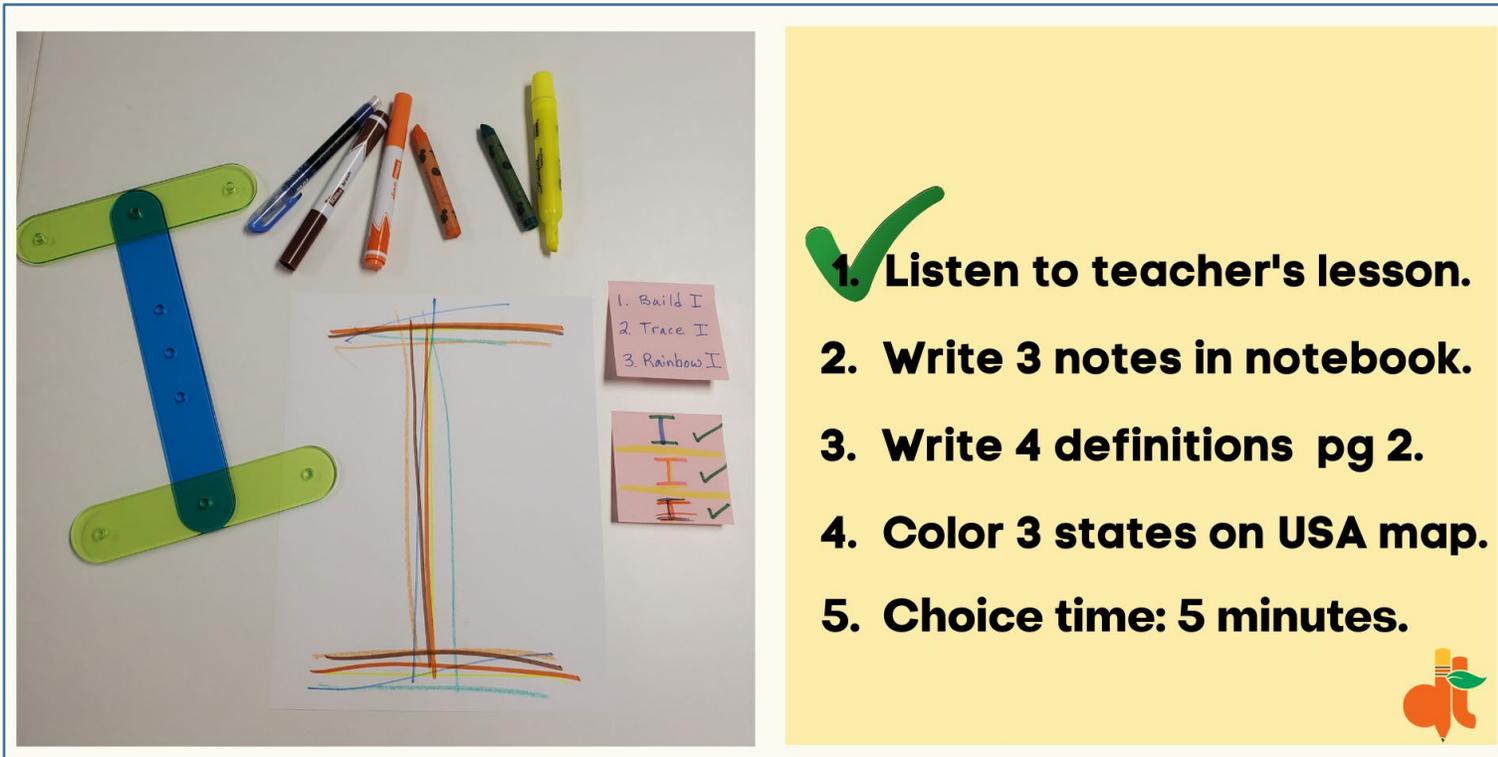
Builds executive function skills

1. Attend the teacher's daily lesson
Based on self-regulation; a break may be needed
Adult prepares 2 to 3 copies
2. Student repeats the lesson for up to 3 days
High to low scaffolds/modifications
3. When class begins a new unit, move on



Organization and Planning

Short Task Lists: written on sticky notes or laminated paper



- ✓ **1. Listen to teacher's lesson.**
- 2. Write 3 notes in notebook.**
- 3. Write 4 definitions pg 2.**
- 4. Color 3 states on USA map.**
- 5. Choice time: 5 minutes.**



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Next: _____



Pause and Think

Think about your student who is struggling with reading.

**By teaching regulation tools and strategies,
they may be able to move past book trauma**

and enjoy books a little bit more.