

## Reading Corner — Don't Read Alone!

### Enhancing Our Lives Through Experiences of Others

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My expertise is in teaching children and adults with dyslexic and attention deficit disorders. My perception of these two differences is that they are more related to language and communication differences than in either reading or behavior (although reading and behavior are, of course, concomitant issues).

Even though dyslexia and attention deficit disorders can create a handicapping condition for individuals due to improper teaching and training, they also can create individuals with a unique perspective on the world. If they are able to tap into this perspective, then their “difference” can become a positive, creative force.

That said, I want to shift to two books I have read this year concerning autism — Temple Grandin’s 1995 book *Thinking in Pictures and Other Reports from My Life with Autism* and the novel *the curious incident of the dog in the night-time* by Mark Haddon. Both of these books give a view of autism from the eyes of individuals with the disorder.

Grandin’s book is not just autobiographical, discussing her view of the world in pictures and presenting a great deal of well-research information concerning autism. However, it is her journey through a world she had to “learn language like a second language” that kept me fascinated.

Haddon’s novel follows 15-year-old Christopher, a boy with autism, as he attempts to solve the murder of his neighbor’s dog and as he sets out on a journey to London by himself. Haddon allows us to follow the thought processes of Christopher and to see the effects he has on others through the boy’s eyes and interpretation.

Both books gave me a wider understanding of some of the issues faced by individuals with autism, but also reinforced that, sometimes, disabilities may bring with them unique perspectives which can enhance our own lives if we will only try to look through their eyes.

*Editor's Note; Have you read a good book lately that might be of interest to other professionals who work with adults with special learning needs? Send us your review and we'll include it in the newsletter. Remember, reading is an important adventure — Don't do it alone!*