

Opening Boundaries:

Accommodations for Students with Dyslexia

Rebecca Allen, NBCT, CALT, QInT
K-12 Literacy Specialist and Dyslexia Therapist
rallen@crmail.k12.ar.us

GOAL 1

Understand dyslexia and how it impacts the students in your classroom.

"Dyslexia affects reading at the single word level, reading fluency and rate, and spelling. In turn, these weaknesses cause difficulties with reading comprehension and written expression. Other abilities that do not require reading, such as general intelligence, reasoning, oral language, mathematics, and knowledge are often unimpaired. In other words, the reading and spelling difficulties are often unexpected in relation to the person's other abilities."

(Mather & Wendling, 2014).

What Dyslexia Is and Isn't

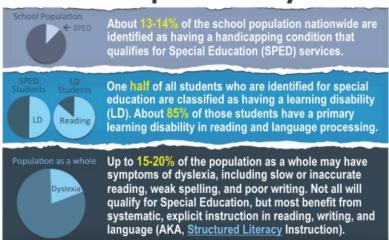
What is dyslexia?



74% of children who display reading problems in first grade, will be poor readers in 9th grade if they do not receive direct explicit instruction in phonemic awareness.

- National Institutes of Health

How widespread is dyslexia?



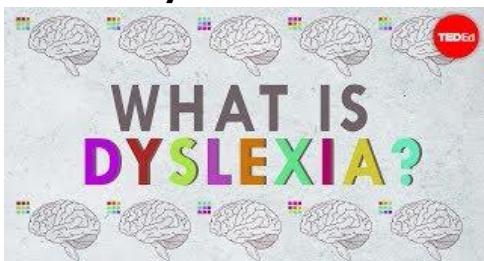
Find solutions at the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) • ida.org
Source: IDA Fact Sheet, "Dyslexia Basics" • Moats & Dakin (© 2016 Coven For IDA)

Thinking, reasoning, and understanding are untouched by dyslexia.

— Overcoming Dyslexia by Sally Shaywitz, M.D.

- > Dyslexia is NOT... reading or writing backwards
- > Dyslexia is NOT... caused by poor eyesight, vision processing problems or hearing problems
- > Dyslexia is NOT... an intellectual or developmental disability
- > Dyslexia is NOT... more prevalent in boys than girls
- > Dyslexia is NOT... a lack of educational opportunity or lack of books in the home
- > Dyslexia is NOT... a lack of motivation or laziness, in fact students with dyslexia are working harder than their peers
- > Dyslexia is NOT... uncommon (15-20% of population)
- > Dyslexia is NOT... responsive to standard reading instruction

What is Dyslexia?



Variability in the Aspects of the Disorder

- Severity ranges from mild to moderate
- Responsiveness to intervention
- Difficulty with related aspects of reading, spelling, writing, math or language learning.
- Coexisting conditions, such as anxiety, attention or word retrieval difficulties.
- Coexisting strengths, or areas of talent and interest that enable a person to do well in life, such as visual-spatial, athletic or intellectual gifts.

“...secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”



Accommodations

Learning Differently



Classroom Materials and Routines

- Post visual schedules and also read them out loud.
- Consider visual organization of worksheets.
- Use audiobooks ([Bookshare](#), a free online library for students with disabilities).
- Allow the student to use [text-to-speech software](#) and [speech-to-text software](#).
- Have on hand "hi-lo" books (books with high-interest topics for students reading below grade level).

Classroom Materials and Routines

- Provide extra time for reading and writing.
- Give the student multiple opportunities to read the same text.
- Use reading buddies during work time (as appropriate).
- Partner up for studying—one student writes while the other speaks, or they share the writing.



Introducing a New Concept

- Pre-teach new concepts and vocabulary.
- Provide the student with typed notes or an outline of the lesson to help with taking notes.
- Provide advance organizers to help the student follow along during a lesson.
- Provide a glossary of content-related terms.
- Use visual or audio support to help the student understand written materials in the lecture.

"Good instruction can prevent
a lifetime of difficulties:
A good beginning has no end."

Judith Birsh
Multisensory teaching of Basic Language Skills:
Connecting Research and Practice, p. 21.

Giving Instructions

- Give step-by-step directions and read written instructions out loud.
- Simplify directions using key words for the most important ideas.
- Highlight key words and ideas on worksheets for the student to read first.
- Check in frequently to make sure the student understands and can repeat the directions.

Giving Instructions

- Show examples of correct and completed work to serve as a model.
- Provide a rubric that describes the elements of a successful assignment.
- Help the student break assignments into smaller steps.
- Give self-monitoring checklists and guiding questions for reading comprehension.
- Arrange worksheet problems from easiest to hardest.

Be reflective about the teaching environment and methods of instruction.

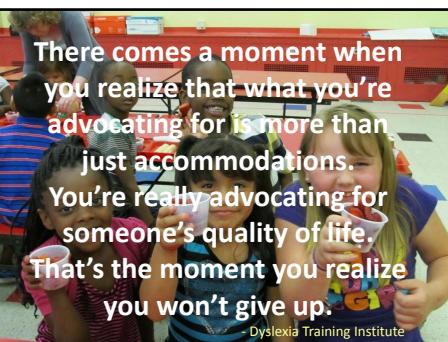
Completing Tests and Assignments

- Grade the student on the content that needs to be mastered, not on things like spelling or reading fluency.
- Allow understanding to be demonstrated in different ways, like oral reports, posters, and video presentations.
- Provide different ways to respond to test questions, like saying the answers or circling an answer instead of filling in the blank.
- Provide sentence starters that show how to begin a written response.
- Provide extended time for taking tests.
- Provide a quiet room for taking tests, if needed.

Set high expectations for intellectual stimulation but reasonable expectations for written response.

"A dyslexic cannot simply memorize or do things by rote; she must get far underneath the concept and understand it at a fundamental level. This need often leads to a deeper understanding and a perspective that is different from what is achieved by some for whom things come easier because they just can memorize and repeat - without ever having to deeply and thoroughly understand."

-Sally Shaywitz, Overcoming Dyslexia, p. 58



The Power of Dyslexia

*"As a kid I had a hard time reading in school.
I was the kid who would go one period a day
to the class for kids with learning disabilities."*
