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A Handbook for Students with Dyslexia Learning to Understand it and Learning How to Help Themselves

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A HANDBOOK FOR

STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA

LEARNING TO UNDERSTAND IT

AND

LEARNING HOW TO HELP THEMSELVES

by

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The purpose of this project was to expand upon a current workshop that taught students about positive self-esteem and how to self-advocate for themselves, by creating a handbook of information about dyslexia and some strategies to pre-expose them to the workshop content. The handbook includes an appendix with all required material to complete the workshop. The project also contains, a review of current literature and research related to dyslexia including the definition, diagnosis, testing, remediation, and self-esteem in regards to dyslexia was conducted.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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I would also like to thank Dr. Andrea Bowman for inspiring me go the extra mile and turn a further endorsement area into a Master's program. It is largely due to her encouragement that I decided to obtain my Master's of which now I am eternally grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND OF THE PROJECT

Introduction

According to Washington Administrative Code 392-172-126, in order for a student to be considered learning disabled he or she must be functioning at a normal or higher IQ level, but have discrepancies in at least one of the following areas: "(1) Oral expression, (2) Listening comprehension, (3) Written expression, (4) Basic reading skill, (5) Reading comprehension, (6) Mathematics calculations, and (7) Mathematics reasoning" (Chapter 392-172 WAC, 1995, p. 27). The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction also indicates that, "A specific learning disability includes conditions described as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia, when the student meets the illegibility criteria set forth in WAC 392-172-128, including documentation of severe discrepancy as required by WAC 392-172-132" (OSPI Special Education Web Site). According to the Washington Administrative Code 1995, eligibility criteria allows for individuals with dyslexia to be considered under the category of Specific Learning Disabilitiy.

It has been open for interpretation that dyslexia is indeed a specific learning disability. This project will address the areas of discrepancy that students with dyslexia face, and some teaching strategies that may assist students with self-advocacy and self-esteem issues.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to expand upon a current workshop, "Understanding LD* by Susan McMurchie" (1994) that taught students about positive self-esteem and how to self-advocate for themselves, by creating a handbook of information about dyslexia and some strategies to get them prepared for the workshop. The workshop is conducted by teachers for students with a specific learning disability (SLD), specific to this project for students with dyslexia. The handbook includes an appendix with all required material to complete the workshop (McMurchie, 1994).

Limitations of the Project

The "Dyslexia, A Guide To Understanding It and Learning How to Help Yourself", handbook was developed to be used with grades 4-6, to compliment a current workshop titled "Understanding LD."

Definition of Terms

The following definition's are provided to delineate their meaning as it was used in this paper.

Self-Esteem: Self-esteem is satisfaction with one's self (American Heritage Dictionary, 1989). It was also define by McMurchie as accepting of one's self (1994).

Self-Advocacy: Self-advocacy is described by McMurchie as, "to articulate their needs, talk about their problems, stand up to testing, and make friends on their own terms" (1994).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

In this review of the historical perspective form 1969 to present, a search was conducted to locate the definition of dyslexia. The protocol to diagnose and assess for dyslexia, strategies to remediate or accommodate in the classroom for students with dyslexia, the relationship between dyslexia and contemporary issues including self-esteem and self-advocacy were examined. It was through this section that the need for this handbook was determined. McMurchie stated that her students had a need to learn how to, "articulate their needs, talk about their problems, stand up to teasing, and make friends on their own terms" (1994).

Definition

It is important to first define dyslexia. According to Edwards (1994), "Dyslexia is recognizable as a measurable discrepancy between cognitive ability and literacy level. It can be clearly seen as a substantial difference between Level of Intelligence and Reading/Spelling age on traditional scales" (p. 5). The World Federation of Neurology in 1969 proclaimed, that this is "perhaps the clearest, simplest, and most effective definition of dyslexia:"

> Dyslexics are categorized as those who 'despite conventional classroom experience fail to attain the language skills or reading, writing and spelling commensurate with their intellectual abilities'. (cited in Edwards, 1994, p. 5)

This helps to gain understanding of what dyslexia is, but it is also important to note that dyslexia is a verbal disorder not a visual disorder. The first case of dyslexia was documented by Pringle Morgan, an ophthalmologist, who speculated that dyslexia was related to "congenital word blindness." For many years it was believed that dyslexia was related to visual processing deficiencies. Snowling (1996) states that recent research indicates that this is not the case. The word dyslexia is derived from the Greek "dys" meaning poor or inadequate and "lexis" meaning words or language. According to a brochure by The International Dyslexia Association (1999) "Dyslexia results from differences in the structure and function of the brain. This means that the person with dyslexia has problems translating language to thought or (as in listening or reading) or thought to language (as in writing or speaking)."

Diagnosis

The most recent research articles on the cause of dyslexia was in March, 1998. Shaywitz, a professor at the Yale University School of Medicine, "found convincing evidence that dyslexia, a language-based learning disability, is caused by a functional disruption in the brain" (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 1998, p. 1). In an article about Shaywitz's experiment (as quoted in Suplee, 1998) stated that, "scientists have been able to identify specific brain malfunctions involved in dyslexia - a discovery that could improve understanding of the chronic reading problem that afflicts 10 million Americans" (p.2). The article implied that most people believe dyslexia to be when somebody reads letters backwards. Recently it was determine that it has little to do

with, "recognizing the visual form of words. Rather, dyslexia, which affects 80 percent of all those labeled 'learning disabled,' entails an inability to blend the letters of written words into the 44 distinct sounds (called phonemes) in American English - a capability called 'phonologic awareness'" (Suplee, 1998, p. 1). In an article titled, "Just the Facts . . . Dyslexia Basics" (1998) by Levinson supports Suplee's definition by stating, "Dyslexia accounts for approximately 85%of all people with a learning disability." They also state, "Dyslexia is a life-long status, however, its impact can change at different stages in a person's life" (p. 962). Another "Just The Facts" sheet titled "Dyslexia: Is It All In Your Mind?" (1998) by Sherman, also concur's with Shaywitz in that, "anatomical and brain imagery studies show differences in the way the brain of a dyslexic person develops and functions. Moreover, people with dyslexia have been found to have problems identifying speech sounds in words and how letter represent them" (1997, p. 961). The "Just the Facts" sheet (1998) by Kaufman also stated;

> Although research in ongoing and some results vary, the National Institute of Health and other reputable agencies estimate that between 10-15% of the men, and women, and children in this country are dyslexic. Dyslexia occurs in people of all backgrounds and intellectual levels. There is strong evidence that dyslexia runs in families; dyslexic parents are far more likely to have children who have dyslexia. Some people are identified as dyslexic early in their lives, but for others their dyslexia goes unidentified until they get older. People who are very bright can be

dyslexic. (p. 962)

In Shaywitz's study scientists used a "brain-mapping" procedure called a functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), to monitor mental activity in 61 patients (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 1998). This mapping allowed the scientists to see which parts of the brain are most active at a given time. They gave the subjects five different exercises. According to Suplee (1998) each exercise, "required progressively more effort in processing the sound aspects of written language, as distinct from merely recognizing shapes, letters or words" (p. 2). They tested 32 readers who did not have dyslexia and found that they used a part of the rear part of the brain. The 29 dyslexic readers showed very little activity in that part of their brain, but rather used the front-brain section called the Broca's area. Shaywitz's study was critical for the future of the dyslexics because, "these brain activation patterns, by revealing a functional disruption in those neural systems responsible for reading, now provide neurobiologic evidence for what, up to now, has been a hidden disability" (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 1998, p. 2). Now we know what dyslexia is and what causes it.

The brochure from The International Dyslexia Association (1999) and the "Just the Facts sheet" (1998) by Kaufman concur on these characteristics that accompany dyslexia;

1. Lack of awareness of sounds in words, rhymes, or sequence of sounds and syllables in words.
2. Difficulty decoding - word identification.

3. Difficulty encoding words - spelling.
4. Poor sequencing of numbers, of letter in words, when read or written.
5. Difficulty expression thoughts in written form.
6. Delayed spoken language.
7. Imprecise or incomplete interpretation of language that is heard
8. Difficulty in expressing thoughts orally.
9. Problems with reading comprehension.
10. Confusion about directions in space or time (right and left, up and down, early and late, yesterday and tomorrow, months and days)
11. Confusion about right and left handedness.
12. Difficulty with handwriting.
13. Difficulty in mathematics -often related to sequencing of steps or directionality or the language of mathematics. (p. 962)

Pollock and Waller (1994) address specific learning difficulties for a dyslexic learner in a general education classroom:

1. Mispronunciation of words.
2. Confusion over similar-sounding words.
3. Misunderstanding the meanings of words well within the capability of their age range.
4. A young child learning colors, for instance, may have no problem in picking out the blue bricks, or matching them to others, but may find it

extremely difficult to give the correct response when asked, 'What color is this?'

5. Difficulty over the rhythm of words, often getting the stress of syllables in the wrong place.

5. Confusion over the mispronunciation of people's names.

6. Difficulty understanding verb tenses and time, and understanding the passive tense.

7. Difficulty in using verb tenses and sentence structure.

8. Difficulty learning nursery rhymes, and later poetry, multiplication tables, and so on.

9. Confusion in processing two or three requests or instructions.

10. Failure to understand: proverbs, euphemisms, idioms. They tend to take them literally.

11. Failure to pick up nuances or vibes, which leads him into trouble with accusations of being cheeky when he has not appreciated that comment is inappropriate!

12. Persistent difficulties in pronouncing polysyllabic words such as hospital (hospital), and forever coming up with spooner-isms such as parcark, glutterby, sgapetti, crinimal. Also, confusing tow similar words such as accept and except.

13. Having difficulty finding eh correct word and always using such terms as thingummy-jigand what't-its'name. (p. 18-20)

According to the Web Site from the International Dyslexia Association (1999), "not all students who have difficulties with these skills are dyslexic. Formal testing is the only way to confirm a diagnosis of suspected dyslexia."

Testing

Dyslexia varies in degrees of severity (Kaufmann, 1998). Kaufman claims that, "The prognosis depends on the severity of the disability, specific patterns of strengths and weaknesses with the individual, and the appropriateness of the intervention" (1998, p. 976). If a person is suspected as being dyslexic, it is important to have them evaluated. Test results determine eligibility for special education services in various states, and they also determine the baseline from which remediation programs will be evaluated. Individuals can be tested at any age. According to Kaufmann, " Tests which are selected will vary according to the age of the individual. Young children may be tested for phonological processing, receptive and expressive language abilities, and the ability to make sound/symbol associations" (1998, p. 976). The tester of dyslexia should be professionals who possess expertise in several disciplines. The testing may be done by an individual or by a team of specialists. Although, a knowledge and background in psychology, reading, language, and education is necessary, according to Kaufmann (1998, p. 976). Kaufmann also states, "The tester must have knowledge of how individuals learn to read and why some people have trouble learning to read, and must also understand how

to measure spoken and written language. A knowledge of appropriate reading interventions is necessary to make recommendations" (1998, p. 976). Kaufman (1998) indicates that no single test should be used. A battery should be chosen on the basis of their measurement properties and their potential to address referral issues. According to Kaufmann (1998) the following elements should be included in an assessment of dyslexia;

1. A developmental, medical, behavioral, academic and family history.
2. A measure of general intellectual functioning.
3. Information on cognitive processing (language, memory, auditory processing, visual processing, visual motor integration, reasoning abilities, and executive functioning).
4. Tests of specific oral language skills related to reading and writing success to include tests of phonological awareness.
5. Educational tests to determine level of functioning in basic skill areas of reading, spelling, written language, and math - testing in reading/writing should include the following measures:
    - single word decoding of both real and nonsense words.
    - oral and silent reading in context (evaluate rate, fluency, comprehension, and accuracy)
    - reading comprehension
    - dictated spelling test

- written expression: sentence writing as well as story or essay writing
- handwriting

6. A classroom observation, and a review of the language arts curriculum for the school-aged child to assess remediation programs which have been tried. (p. 976)

After the testing there should be a written report consisting of both the test scores as well as an explanation of the results. Remediation should be based on these results.

Remediation

The key to understanding the problems that a dyslexic faces and knowing what dyslexia is and where it comes from, and understanding that these students are indeed learning disabled, you will be able to see a dyslexic's problems and some of the irritating things which he does, in a new light. It is important for a parent and a teacher of a dyslexic child to let them know that you are willing to understand (Miles & Miles, 1983). The following are some suggestions for class teachers to help the child with dyslexia:

1. Listen carefully to the child's speech - and believe your ears!
2. Speak more slowly and face the child.
3. Children need to develop good listening habits, including eye contact. Time for exchange of new in pairs or small groups is well spent. It often helps if small groups in, for instance, infant classes sit in a circle and face each other for News Time.

4. Tapping or clapping rhythms. Children may begin by tapping or clapping the syllables/beats of their own names, including emphasizing any stressed syllables. Gradual progression should be made to words which they tend to mispronounce, and later to words that they tend to misspell.

5. Communicating through rhythm alone, as with the African Talking Drums. A game may be played by the teacher clapping the rhythm of a nursery rhyme or pop-song and seeing who can recognize it.

6. Ensure that each child understands the meanings of the key words when he is being spoken to or when he is reading. Visual clues (pictures) are useful backup to spoken or written information. If working on a particular topic in class, the child may require the key vocabulary to be repeated several times before it is firmly established. Older children value flow diagrams with color support.

7. A string of requests should be given separately, if possible going on to the second after the first has been accomplished, and so on. Parents' help can be enlisted to iron out confusions over their requests of the Take off your boots, go upstairs and wash your hands type. Is helpful to encourage children to create a picture in their minds of the information to be remembered, e.g. taking of dirty boots, seeing themselves walking upstairs and washing their hands; or, similarly, doing a task in school.

8. Requests need to be constructed for such children to ensure that the meaning is really understood. Gestures by the teacher or parent often preclude the under standing of words; it is the gestures alone that are understood.

9. Over a period of time the number of a string of requests can be gradually increased. This can be played as a game in class; e.g. the teacher asks a child to go to the front of the room, take three pencils from the desk, give one to Gavin, one to Karen and one to Stephen, then go and sit down. The number of requests can be varied according to the abilities of the children; and, of course, the child with a problem of language processing should be given the number that has a good chance of achieving successfully, gradually increasing the number of requests. This can also be a useful exercise in concentration of memory for the rest of the class.

10. It often helps to give children opportunities to demonstrate their understanding in practical ways. They may not be able to find the correct language to classify the arranged materials - in for instance, SATS Science - but by physically putting like with like they may show an amazing degree of understanding and achievement. These children often fail because they have misunderstood the language rather than having been unable to carry out the task. They may need to have questions repeated or reworded.

11. In a classroom discussion or in a family discussion, people should try to ensure that the child is involved in at least one direct remark. The child should be given time and help, and not put under pressure, for he must (a) understand, (b) find the appropriate vocabulary, and (c) string his thoughts into a grammatical construction which can be understood. All this may not come easy. Initially, a one-word response may be all that he achieves, but he has at least been included. As confidence grows he can be encouraged to attempt more complex replies.

12. When a new concept has been introduced to the class it is helpful if, on occasions, the child with comprehension difficulties can be teacher and explain the new information to someone else or on to a tape. It will then become more secure in that child's understanding. (Pollock & Waller, 1994, p. 23-24).

According to the Henry of The International Dyslexia Association (1998) in an article titled "Multisensory Teaching" she states, "Multisensory teaching is simultaneously visual, auditory, and kinesthetic-tactile to enhance memory and learning. Links are consistently made between the visual (what we see), auditory (what we hear), and kinesthetic-tactile (what we feel) pathways in learning to read and spell. Rawson, a former president of The International Dyslexia Association, said it well:

> Dyslexic students need a different approach to learning language from that employed in most classrooms. They need to be taught, slowly and thoroughly, the

> basic elements of their language - the sounds and the letter which represent them- and how to put these together and take them apart. They have to have lots of practice in having their hands, eyes, ears, and voices, working together for the conscious organization and retention of learning. (as cited in Henry, 1998, p. 969).

Henry recommends that teachers and students rely on all three pathways for learning rather than focusing on a "sight word" or memory method, a "tracing method," or a "phonetic method" alone (1998, p. 969). The rationale to this theory established by Orton, the founder of The International Dyslexia Association, is that children with dyslexia often exhibit weaknesses in auditory and/or visual processing. They may have weak phonemic awareness, difficulty rhyming words, blending sounds to make words, or segmenting words into sounds. They may also have difficulty acquiring a sight vocabulary. When taught using a multisensory approach students have the advantage of learning alphabetic patterns and words by utilizing all three pathways (Henry, 1998, p. 969). Now we have some strategies for dealing with dyslexic students in the general classroom, that not only will help the effected student, but will also benefit the general education student as well. The key to implementing these, are to build the dyslexic students confidence in language situations. Pollock and Waller (1994) state, "a child may be thought to be unable to communicate freely because of lack of confidence and social skill, rather than the lack of confidence and social skills being caused by difficulties in communication." (p. 24).

Self-esteem & Self-advocacy

According to Levinson (1998), "Dyslexia can also affect a person's self-image. Students with dyslexia often end up feeling 'dumb' and less capable than they actually are" (p. 962). After experiencing a great deal of stress due to academic difficulties a student may become discouraged and frustrated. According to McMurchie the key to overcoming the low self-esteem is through understanding of their disability and by teaching them how to advocate for themselves (1994). According to Anderson the following steps are essential to becoming a self-advocate:

1. Each student be taught about the disability in general, as well as how he/she is affected by the disability.
2. Each student should understand the disability and be able to understand and counter each disability with a strength.
3. Each student should be able to succinctly articulate each aspect of the disability and enumerate one strength to counter each part of the disability.
4. Denial of ones learning disability is a serious problem. Be aware that denial will cause huge amounts of low self-esteem and credibility. Monitor your grades, don't let low grades sneak up on you. Use your planner. (1998, p. 1-2).

There are books available such as, "The survival Guide of Kids with LD (Learning Differences)" by Fisher and Cummings, (1990), and "The School Survival Guide for Kids with LD (Learning Difficulties)" by Cummings and Fisher, (1991), who say, "If your a kid

with learning difficulties, you may not like school very much. You may not like school at all. You can go through school feeling mad and sad. Or you can read this book, and learn how to make things better for yourself" (1991). Fisher and Cummings claim, "FACT: Kids with Learning Difficulties are smart and can learn. They just learn differently" (1990). There is also curriculum available to teach students with learning difficulties, such as, "Understanding LD" by Susan McMurchie (1994). This curriculum teaches LD awareness, self-esteem and coping skills. McMurchie, a resource room teacher, discovered:

> As these students were preparing to go to middle school, I was expecting that they would be able to advocate for themselves - to articulate their needs, talk about their problems, stand up to teasing, and make friends on their own terms. But this was not happening. Even more discouraging, I began to notice that many of my fourth and fifth graders were expressing negative feelings about themselves and their capabilities. It realized that all of my remedial work with them would be in vain if I did not help these children become more aware of their learning disabilities and more accepting of themselves. It was then that I created the 'Lunch Bunch,' a special group for my students with LD that met during the lunch period twice a month. (1994, p. 1).

There is a video series called "Pathways to performance" by Gavin, that also includes a handbook that describes more than 70 activities that open up the capabilities and talents of young learning disabled children, as well as, an added video cassette titled,

"Dealing with Dyslexia" (Gavin, 1999, p. 2). Another resource discovered was, "The Mind That's Mine" by Levine in collaboration with The Schwab Foundation for Learning. The program overview is as follows:

> This curriculum focuses on how children learn, how they learn to learn, and how their different abilities enable them to acquire the skills they need to succeed. Different children have different kinds of minds, unique patterns of strengths and weaknesses, and individual affinities. This program encourages students to recognize, tolerate, and respect individual differences in learning and behavior. Designed for upper elementary classrooms, this program helps students understand various brain functions while developing strategies to improve performance. "The Mind That's Mine" may be especially helpful with children who harbor learning difficulties. The program can help them improve self-concept and correct misconceptions about their capacity to do well. (Dr. Levine, 1999, p. 1).

Lastly, a book titled, "The Gift of Dyslexia: Why Some of the Smartest People Can't Read and How They Can Learn" by Davis (1997). This book is divided into four parts:

1. What Dyslexia Really Is
2. Little P.D. - A Developmental Theory of Dyslexia
3. The Gift, which includes understanding the talent, curiosity, creativity, and the gift of mastery.
4. Doing Something About It

The previous four work-shops focused on several areas from understanding the learning disability, the student's possibilities, limitations, and strengths, increasing their self-esteem, and some included teaching advocacy. An underlying current in all was that Dyslexia is a life-long condition. With proper help people, understanding, and accommodations, through the teachings of self-advocacy students of dyslexia are capable of succeeding. Early identification and treatment is the key to helping dyslexics achieve in school and life (Levinson, 1999, p. 962).

Summary

Dyslexia was defined as the, "hidden disability" (Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 1998). This new research should now bring to light some new methods not yet discovered in helping the dyslexic child. Maybe then the process of overcoming would be faster if there wasn't the need to build the self-esteem first. Currently though, this is not the case and therefore building self-esteem and the need for self-advocating are critical components for students with learning differences, like dyslexia, succeeding in school.

CHAPTER 3

PROCEDURES OF THE PROJECT

The purpose of this project was to expand upon a current workshop that taught students about positive self-esteem and how to self-advocate for themselves, by creating a handbook of information about dyslexia and some strategies to get them prepared for the workshop. The handbook includes an appendix with all required material to complete the workshop. To accomplish this purpose, a review of current literature and research related to dyslexia including the definition, diagnosis, testing, remediation, and self-esteem in regards to dyslexia was conducted to determine current thinking about dyslexia. Several national organizations were contacted to request outlines or designs of available workshops. A review of workshops was conducted and one was selected.

Chapter 3 contains background information describing:

1. Need for the Project
2. Procedures
3. Planned Implementation and Assessment

Need for the Project

The need for the project was influenced by the following considerations:

1. The writer, (Vikki L. Dolman), a parent of a child who was struggling with reading, spelling, and writing, and whom was suspected as having dyslexia.

2. Undertaking this project has afforded an opportunity to review current research related to dyslexia and to strategies for serving students with learning disabilities.

3. Research has provided an overview as to workshops available for students with learning differences and in developing a handbook for students with dyslexia.

Procedures

To obtain background information essential for developing a handbook about dyslexia for students, a hand-search of selected items was undertaken. Several national organizations were also contacted through the Internet to view workshops teaching students with learning disabilities, such as, The International Dyslexia Association, The Schwab Foundation for Learning, and The British Dyslexia Association . One workshop was selected to create the handbook for. The review of literature provided important components for helping the dyslexic student and were the basis for the following criteria which was selected as important elements in deciding upon a workshop to base the handbook from:

1. The need of first building the student's self-esteem.
2. Teaching the students about their area of disability.
3. Teaching students with dyslexia to understand how learning occurs and what works best for them.

4. Finally, how to apply the information in advocating for themselves in the general education classroom.

5. The cost of the workshop was also considered.

Planned Implementation and Assessment

The handbook presented in Chapter 4 of this project will be reviewed by the writer after the writer obtains a teaching position. In the event that the writer's future school district would be interested in implementing its use, input will be invited from participants. Modifications resulting from dialogue may be made at the discretion of the writer and participating members.

CHAPTER 4

THE PROJECT

The handbook for students with dyslexia developed to complement the workshop titled, "Understanding LD," which was the subject of this project, has been present in Chapter four in five sections:

Section 1 - What is Dyslexia? & What Does LD Mean?

Section 2 - How Dyslexia & LD Affects Me & How Learning Happens

Section 3 - What is Your Learning Style?

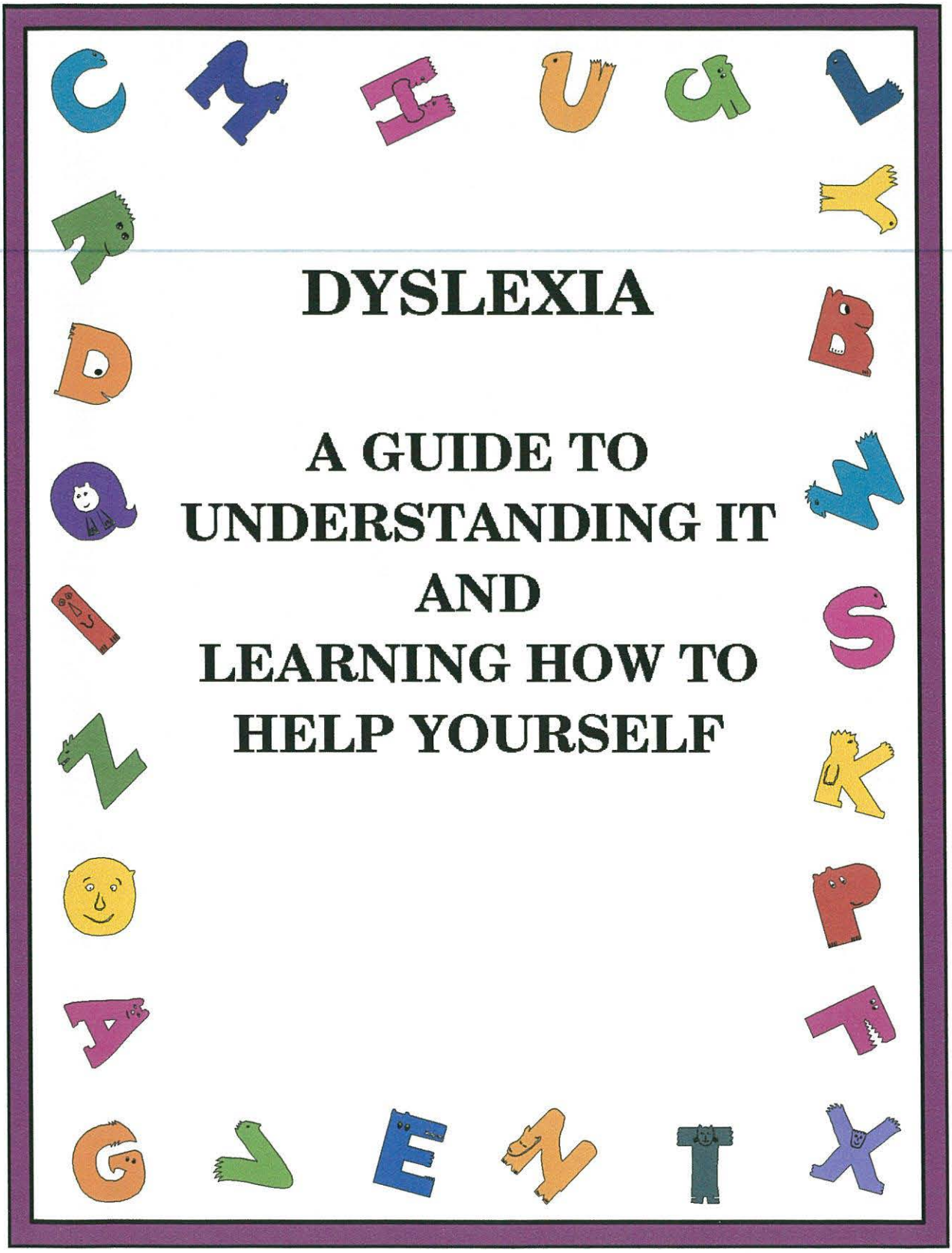
Section 4 - Understanding My Dyslexia & LD

Section 5 - Seminar - Understanding LD

Appendix - Student Handouts

The handbook was designed to be used prior to the workshop. The reasoning behind this was that the review of literature determined the need for students to understand their learning disability. The workshop chosen was designed for all students with learning difficulties and in order to ensure the student with dyslexia's understandings of their particular difficulty a supplement to the workshop, the "handbook", was needed. Prior exposure to their particular learning difference would be taught first in a separate meeting including just students experiencing this difficulty. They would then join a larger group of students who do not have dyslexia, but are diagnosed with learning difficulties and complete the workshop. This workshop was designed to a be adapted to the users needs,

and a list of age appropriate literature is provided. The literature includes stories of children who experience various types of learning differences. The accommodation that I recommend is the use of the recommended literature dealing with dyslexia, at various points in the workshop, when literature is called for. However, I would not always use this particular literature. I would vary the literature so that a literature story for every area of student's learning differences that was participating in the workshop was identified so that the students would learn an appreciation for each others difficulties. The other accommodation to the workshop I would recommend is Session 4 on "How Learning Happens" this session was covered briefly in the Handbook provided, I would still cover it with the group quickly focusing on page 35, "We All Have Strengths". Session 4 is a critical component later in the workshop and prior exposure in the handbook will be beneficial for the students. I would also required students to keep a weekly journal as a form of assessment. The journal would be reviewed as an exit interview with the handbook and workshop facilitator prior to student graduating and transferring into middle school. Questions and further areas of need would be identified and recommendations discussed with student.



Please note: Clip art throughout this chapter was redacted due to copyright concerns.

Table of Contents

• What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia is a language based learning disability. It accounts for approximately 85% of all people with a learning disability. Dyslexia covers a lot of symptoms which result in people having difficulty with language and reading skills. Students with dyslexia may also experience trouble with spelling, writing, and speaking. Dyslexia is life long, however its impact on a person can change at different stages in that person's life. It is referred to as a learning disability because dyslexia can make it very difficult for a student to succeed in school in the regular learning environment. This does not mean though that you cannot. You absolutely can, but it is up to you.

• What Does LD Mean?

What does LD mean? That is a good question. Earlier it was described as "learning disabled." Others say it means "learning different." Who is to say what it means for everyone. For us it is going to mean "learning different." Everyone learns in their own way. Some kids learn to read before Kindergarten and some after. Some kids are great with reading and others are great with math. A few students have a tough time with every area. But they may be good at other things such as art, working in the yard, or building things. Just because kids with LD have a tough time learning doesn't mean they can't. It means they need different strategies to help because they are learning differently than other kids.

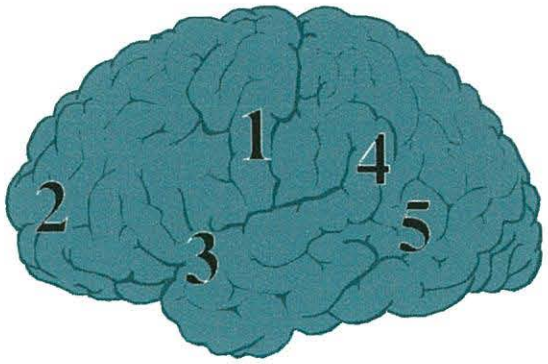
• How Dyslexia & LD Affects Me

Just because you are having learning differences does not mean you are dumb. It doesn't mean that you can't learn. You just need to learn the right way for you to learn and how to ask others to help you do that. Below is a list of the areas that are often affected by students with Dyslexia & LD.

_____ Difficulty with Reading
_____Difficulty with Spelling & Writing
_____ Difficulty with Math
_____Difficulty with Memory
_____ Difficulty with Paying Attention
_____ Difficulty with Getting & Staying Organized
_____ Difficulty with Directions, Time, & Space
_____ Very Active or Very Quiet
_____ Difficulty with Physical Education

Make an "X" next to the ones that you have trouble with and need different learning strategies for.

• How Learning Happens



Your brain is divided into 5 areas.

1. Concentration, judgement
2. Organizes thoughts
3. Forms sentences, remembers music, understands spoken words
4. Remembers words
5. Recognizes and organizes what you see

When you learn information it goes into your brain through one of your five senses, sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. Most of the information is presented in school is through sight and hearing. If you are not paying attention to the learning your brain will not take it in. Next, when the information comes in your brain has to decide where to place it. In your memory, where it is stored for later. It must also have perception (understanding) of the information and then it must be able to organize the information in order to decide how your body needs to respond to it. After this decision is made your have output. Output consists of talking, writing, or moving. Teachers at school measure you by your output.

This is where LD comes in. You have now learned that your brain works something like a filing cabinet. It stores information. What happens to a person with LD is that the files sometimes get mixed up in the wrong parts of the brain. Does this mean that your are dumb? NO! You have the information, it is simply stored in a different location. The key to learning for you then is to figure out which senses will help you to access your files and put them in the correct places in your brain. So which senses work best for you?

- **What is Your Learning Style?**

Now we are going to determine which senses work best for you.

1. sight
2. hearing
3. taste
4. smell
5. touch

We do this with a test to determine which senses help you to learn the best. The categories are auditory, kinesthetic, and visual. Auditory uses your sense of hearing. Visual uses your sense of sight. Kinesthetic uses your sense of touch, taste, and sometimes smell. Follow the directions for the test.

Learning Channel Preference

Read each sentence carefully and consider whether it describes you. On the line, write:

3 often describes me
2 sometimes describes me
1 never or almost never describes me

A. Preferred Channel:_____

____ 1. When reading, I listen to the words in my head or read aloud.
____ 2. To memorize something it helps me to say it over and over again.
____ 3. I need to discus things to understand them.
____ 4. I don't need to take notes in class.
____ 5. I remember what people have said better than what they are wearing.
____ 6. I like to record things and listen to the tapes.
____ 7. I'd rather hear somebody talk about something that read it in a book.
____ 8. I can easily follow what someone is saying even when my head is down on the desk or I'm staring out the window.
____ 9. I talk to myself when I am doing school work.
____ 10. I prefer to have someone tell me how to do something that read how to do it myself.

"A" Total _____

B. Preferred Channel:_____

____ 1. I don't like to read or listen to directions, I'd rather just start doing.
____ 2. I learn best when I am shown how to do something and then have the opportunity to do it.
____ 3. I can study better when music is playing.
____ 4. I solve problems better with trial-by-error than a step-by-step.
____ 5. My desk or locker looks disorganized.
____ 6. I need fequent breaks while studying.
____ 7. I take notes but never go back and read them.
____ 8. I do not easily become lost, even in new surroundings.
____ 9. I think better when I can move around, sitting at my desk is not for me.
____ 10. When I can't think of a specific word, I use words like, "thing-a-ma-jig."

"B" Total _____

C. Preferred Channel:_____

____ 1. I enjoy doodling in my notes and have lots of pictures, arrows, etc. in them.
____ 2. I remember something better if I write it down.
____ 3. When trying to remember something, like a telephone number, it helps to picture it in my head.
____ 4. When taking a test, I can see the page in my head with the answer on it.
____ 5. Unless I write directions down, I am likely to get lost.
____ 6. It helps me to look at the person who is speaking, or I get lost.
____ 7. I can clearly picture things in my head.
____ 8. It is hard for me to understand what others are saying when there is noise in the background.
____ 9. It is difficult for me to understand I joke when I hear it.
____ 10. It is easier for me to get work done in a quiet place.

"C" Total _____

After you total your scores record them below.

A. Auditory _____
B. Kinesthetic _____
C. Visual _____

Your highest score is the easiest way for you to learn. If your scores are close then you need a combination of the three.

- **Understanding My Dyslexia & LD**

Current research on Dyslexia indicates that this last statement is usually true in helping with learning differences for dyslexia. It is indicated that the use of all three learning styles should be applied to all learning areas until the repeated use of the different learning styles makes the connection and places the file in the correct spot in your brain.

Pair up the areas that you checked for How Dyslexia & LD Affects Me and compare it with type of learner you discovered that you are. You may want to share this information with your teacher. Below is some information of ways that you and your teacher may be able to make some changes:

1. Use a tape recorder
    a. If it is hard to understand your teacher in class you could record it for latter at home.
    b. You could have your reading assignments recorded and listen to them rather than reading them.
    c. You could read your new spelling words into the recorder letter by letter and play it back and practice spelling them.

2. Color Code your Materials - mark important information with certain colors, maybe by a code you and your teacher set up.

3. Draw Pictures
    a. When you are reading you could stop and draw a picture of what you read to help you remember latter.
    b. When studying for a test draw pictures of dates, people, or important events. Then when taking the test remember the pictures.
    c. Ask your teacher to modify the test with pictures rather than written answers.

4. Use a Computer - if you have difficulty with writing you may be able to use a computer as your mode of communication.

5. Keep a Journal -that you and your teacher can look at to communicate about your needs.

- **Seminar - Understanding Ld**

Now you have a better understanding of dyslexia and what LD is, that you learn differently. You have also learned how learning occurs, and what senses you use most. Now it is time to begin a seminar with some other students that also learn differently. They may or may not have dyslexia, that's okay. They are still having some of the same frustrations that you are. Together you will work on the pages that follow to learn more about learning differences and discover new ways to help your self learn better. You will also learn how to ask your teacher and others for help. Along with this there will be sections on self-help, study skills, and coping skills. When you have finished this seminar, share it with your teachers and parents. Then they will know what you have learned, and how to help you better. Remember, you can succeed!

APPENDIX

Disclaimer: The following handouts were included on the basis that they are for classroom use only, as posted on the copyright at the bottom of the handouts, and pending that you purchased the workshop. I intend to use the workshop in my classroom so I included them in the handbook.

It is available from:

Free Spirit Publishing Inc.
400 First Avenue North, Suite 616
Minneapolis, MN 55401-1730
Understanding LD* by Susan McMurchie, M.A.

Please note: These handouts were redacted due to copyright concerns.

SESSION 1

Five Facts about "I Am, I Can"

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this project was to expand upon a current workshop that taught students about positive self-esteem and how to self-advocate for themselves, by creating a handbook of information about dyslexia and some strategies to get them prepared for the workshop. The handbook includes an appendix with all required material to complete the workshop. To accomplish this purpose, a review of current literature and research related to dyslexia including the definition, diagnosis, testing, remediation, and self-esteem in regards to dyslexia was conducted to determine current information regarding dyslexia. Several national organizations were contacted to request outlines or designs of available workshops. A review of workshops was conducted and one was selected based on;

1. The need of first building the student's self-esteem.
2. Teaching the students about their area of disability.
3. Teaching students with dyslexia to understand how learning occurs and what works best for them.
4. Finally, how to apply the information in advocating for themselves in the general education classroom.
5. The cost of the workshop was also considered.

Conclusions

Conclusions reached as a result of this project were:

1. Students, parents, and teachers need general information about dyslexia. As previously mentioned in the review of literature dyslexia is believed to be vision related and noticed when children reverse letters. This is not the case. They need to know that it is not a disease. That it has no cure. That specific ways to diagnose and strategies available to accommodate for students with dyslexia do exist.
2. Students, parents, and teachers need more information on these strategies and how to implement them for themselves, at home, and in the classroom. The key here was developed in the review of literature in the section self-esteem and self-advocacy. Teachers need strategies and techniques to help students with dyslexia. Parents need understanding of their child's learning differences and how to help from home. Lastly, students also need to understand their disability and how they learn best and then learn how to ask for that help.

Recommendations

As a result of this project, the following recommendations have been suggested:

1. Students with dyslexia need training about how they learn and then need to have modeling provided of how to advocate for themselves.

2. To help these students be successful general education teachers need to be provided the opportunity to participate in the workshop/handbook process and willing to accommodate and implement the suggestions that the students request.
3. Teaching students with learning disabilities to have positive self-esteem and how to advocate for themselves is a survival skill to aid in their success.
4. This workshop and handbook should be used along remediating in the resource room at the elementary level. A recommendation for further investigation on how academic learning is effected by self-esteem and the ability to self-advocate is suggested. Students should have the information and skills provided by the handbook and workshop before transferring into middle school.
5. An assessment should be conducted, after students have had time to implement some of the strategies learned. Facilitator should review required journal with student one on one, discussing strategies and successes and areas of need for middle school transition.
6. This workshop should also be assessed by keeping a record of the middle school experience of students who have competed the handbook and workshop. By conducting a follow-up interview with questions that include: (a) What is a learning disability? (b) What are your learning difficulties? (c) How are you accommodating for those? (d) Are you

asking for help at home and in the classroom? (e) Are you receiving the help you are asking for? (f) Tell me your strengths and areas for continued development.

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