

Spring 2018

How Dyslexia Affects Our Students

Kara Burton
kmb283@zips.uakron.edu

Please take a moment to share how this work helps you [through this survey](#). Your feedback will be important as we plan further development of our repository.

Follow this and additional works at: http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects



Part of the [Disability and Equity in Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Burton, Kara, "How Dyslexia Affects Our Students" (2018). *Honors Research Projects*. 612.
http://ideaexchange.uakron.edu/honors_research_projects/612

This Honors Research Project is brought to you for free and open access by The Dr. Gary B. and Pamela S. Williams Honors College at IdeaExchange@UAkron, the institutional repository of The University of Akron in Akron, Ohio, USA. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Research Projects by an authorized administrator of IdeaExchange@UAkron. For more information, please contact mjon@uakron.edu, uapress@uakron.edu.

How Dyslexia Affects Our Students

Kara M. Burton

Department of Education

Honors Research Project

Submitted to

The Honors College

How Dyslexia affects our Students

Abstract

The intention for this project was to research scholarly articles that explain what dyslexia is and how students are affected by this disability in the classroom and in life daily. As a teacher it is important to address this topic since dyslexia is the leading disability that occurs in classrooms and affects approximately one in five students across the United States. The design of this project was research based, expanding over many topics and subtopics. The eight major subtopics primarily focused on include: what is dyslexia; how dyslexia affect students in classroom environments; how teachers, parents, and mentors can help students in their classroom preference. This can be physically done by using proper teaching techniques, including appropriate accommodations, and/or emotionally done by meeting the academic needs of their students and including activities that are proven to help dyslexic students increase their reading abilities. More topics include how parents can help their student at home; the benefits of diagnosing early, and how dyslexia impacts writing, mathematics, science, social studies, or other subject areas besides reading. There are appendices attached to this project that include a list of historic figures as well as current and public figures with dyslexia and their occupations; a list of writing prompts to help assist those looking for interesting topics at home or in the classroom; and a list of helpful websites that address reading techniques and fun games to encourage reading at home or in the classroom. Furthermore, during the project research, teachers were interviewed who have encountered dyslexia in either special education or inclusive classroom settings. Lastly, an anonymous personal story about their experience with dyslexia in school before becoming a teacher in mathematics is included. These are topics that are necessary to the development of students with dyslexia at any age.

Introduction

Imagine a group of only five students, chances are one of them has dyslexia. Dyslexia affects approximately 20% of the United States population and is the most common learning disability among students. It is a broad term but generally stands for a phonological processing problem in a person's brain that causes his or her ability to learn to read and interrupt words, letters, and symbols extremely challenging. According to the Dyslexia Center of Utah (2014), "Children don't outgrow dyslexia, most just learn to compensate" (p. 1). This means as teachers, parents, or caregivers, we will have to work hard to ensure that all dyslexic students have the tools they need to compensate for this difficult disorder.

What is Dyslexia?

Dyslexia can appear to be a defect in language, but according to the Dyslexia Center of Utah (2014), it is, "a localized weakness within the phonological module of the brain. This module is the functional part of the brain where the sounds of language are put together to form words and where words are broken down into sounds." Students have difficulty breaking down any unfamiliar words into necessary fragments that allow the student to understand what he or she is reading. This tends to result in extremely slow reading with multiple errors in language and comprehension. Dyslexia is completely unrelated to intelligence as it is not a result of any type of neurological damage inflicted to the brain. It is a product of the neurological development in the brain (2014) that affects spoken language, written language, memory, and reading comprehension. If additional clarity is needed, please watch this short TED-Ed YouTube video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zafiGBrFkRM> to further understand what is going on in a dyslexic student's brain. The video shows the experiences dyslexics have when reading and describes the time dyslexics spend decoding or manipulating words in detail. It also lists

many famous persons who have dyslexia and explains the neurodiversity that dyslexics experience while reading.

According to the Dyslexia Center of Utah, “74% of children with dyslexia who are not diagnosed by the 2nd grade remain so into adulthood” (2014). This just shows how essential it is to diagnose the systems that any young child could be portraying. It is important to note that a study by Yale University found that gender does not relate to the number of dyslexia cases found in the U.S. However, dyslexics are found to have a genetic learning disability (Hatch, 2014). Students with dyslexia typically have a family member who has dyslexia that may have went undiagnosed when they were a student. Cases will vary from mild to severe making mild cases even more difficult to diagnose.

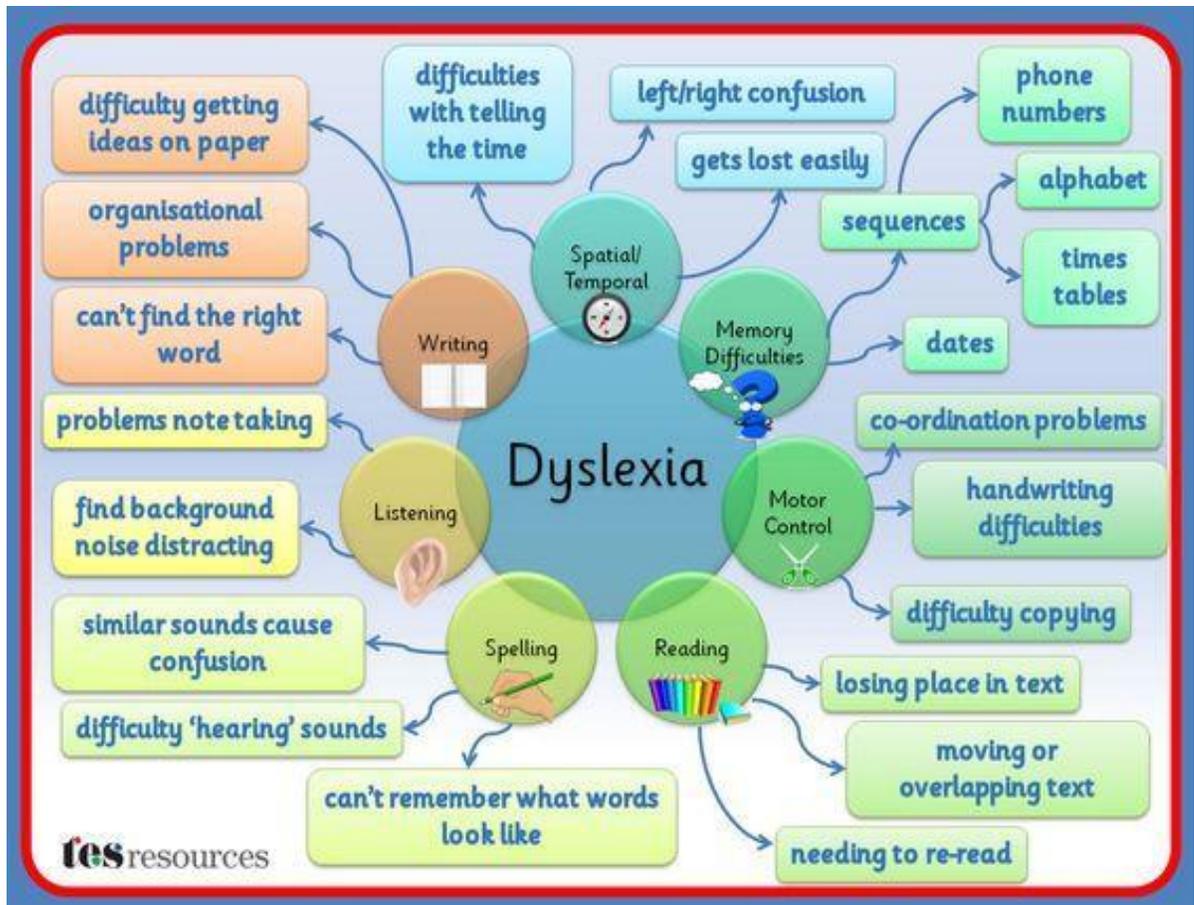
Some mistakes made by dyslexic students may show little or no connection to any letter-sound correspondence. For example, the word “big” is read as “goat” (Dyslexia Center of Utah, 2014). Students could also have trouble remembering the names of letters and individual letter-sound correspondence occurring within words. For example, students will have trouble connecting the letter “c” with the sound a “c” makes. Thus, breaking down words like “cat” becomes more challenging because the student may not be able segment individual letters with the correct sounds 2014.

Indicators of concern: There are many symptoms that could reveal that your child may have dyslexia. However, cases range from mild to severe, so not all dyslexic students will show the same symptoms. Some students may prove to perform very well in certain areas listed as symptoms and still have dyslexia. While other students may show multiple of the symptoms listed below at an intense level. The websites Teaching Writing to the Dyslexic Student (2016),

Diagnosing Dyslexia Effective (2011), and The Dyslexia Center of Utah (2014) provide lists of indicators for dyslexia. The following are some main indicators for concern.

- Reading well below the expected level for your child's age
- Omit parts or full words when reading
- Difficulty recognizing common sight words
- Problems pronouncing unfamiliar words when reading aloud
- Difficulty rhyming
- Problems processing and understanding what he or she hears
- Difficulty comprehending rapid instructions
- Problems remembering the sequence of things, such as lists, numbers, phone numbers, names, dates, etc.
- Inability to sound out the pronunciation of an unfamiliar word
- Difficulty spelling
- Difficulty learning a foreign language
- Difficulty with time awareness
- Have trouble with their ability to process text. For example, symbolic codes such as alphabetic letters or numbers.

The following is a graphic taken from the article, “Diagnosing Dyslexia Effective” (2011). The graphic breaks dyslexia into seven different subtopics that are the areas where dyslexics tend to experience more difficulty. Then the graphic lists the indicators of concern that typically occur under that subtopic.



Slaight, J. K. (2011).

Benefits of diagnosing early. As many students' experience having trouble reading at early ages, most children who enjoy reading have an easier time learning the necessary skills needed to read rather than those who do not enjoy reading. It is important to discover what interests your dyslexic or struggling reader and engage in materials that support their interests. Once students become uninterested in reading it becomes harder to detect whether a student has dyslexia or is simply unwilling to learn to read. Students with dyslexia will fall further and further behind if intervention does not occur at an early level. Once students fall behind in school, other students may notice and tease dyslexic or struggling readers as they mature.

Therefore, students with dyslexia tend to experience extremely low self-esteem by the time they enter middle school.

How Dyslexia Relates to Other Subjects

Writing. Dyslexics tend to experience extreme difficulty creating their own writing prompt ideas. There is an extended list of writing prompts following this paper (Appendix A) for parents and teachers to use at for any writing use. These prompts include writing letters, essays, or any style of writing one could use to improve their writing ability. Difficulty with spelling and grammar is another problem many dyslexics and many students in general face when learning to write. Teachers and parents should use multiple resources to help their students become better writers. A third difficulty that dyslexic students face with writing is proofreading one's own work. This could occur because the students have a short attention span, the students have difficulty acknowledging and seeing their own mistakes, or trouble re-reading their own handing writing due to extreme spelling mistakes. Writing is a difficult area for dyslexics being that is goes hand in hand with reading. Even something like taking notes due is hard for dyslexic students.

Mathematics. Dyslexic students tend to excel much further in mathematical areas than in their reading abilities. Many experience difficulty with word-problems for many of the reasons I have listed above. However, dyscalculia is the mathematical version of dyslexia. It is uncommon to have both dyslexia and dyscalculia. Dyscalculia involves mixing up numbers in a similar fashions words are mixed up for dyslexic students.

Science and Social Studies. When it comes to science and social studies, dyslexic students commonly have trouble reading and comprehending the complex language in text. The

students tend to perform better in these subjects when they can use an audio book with the assigned readings.

Daily Life. In other areas besides reading, there tends to be a strong correlation between dyslexia symptoms and short-term memory loss. This can make memorizing information for tests very tough as dyslexic students have issues with recall while taking tests. Another area of weakness for dyslexics may be their sense of direction such as navigation. This is less common than short-term memory loss, but still occurs in multiple cases across the United States. Students similarly face trouble distinguishing between left and right when putting on shoes at a young age and driving as an adult. Furthermore, many have difficulty filtering out background noises when they are working on almost anything related to reading and writing. Concentration and difficulty with time management (hard to follow a schedule) are obstacles students with dyslexia will need to practice overcoming.

Dyslexia in the Classroom and at Home

Of children placed in special education for learning disabilities, approximately 80% have significant reading disabilities, including dyslexia as their listed learning disability (Society for Neuroscience, 2004). Many of these students require IEPs or 504 plans to track their learning progress. Since learning comes slower to these students, bullying may be occurring in your dyslexic student's life. Dyslexic students experience trouble "fitting-in" with children at same age. Bullying and teasing are often a result of reading and writing slowly compared to others. Because of this, many students tend to give in to peer pressure and have low self-esteem when socializing with other students.

Remember that all children are different however; in general, students with dyslexia have tendencies to enjoy puzzles, are right brain thinkers, are excellent with conceptual skills, and have excellent comprehension of stories told aloud to them. (The Dyslexia Center of Utah, 2014). Students with dyslexia can inspire creativity because it forces the students to think about things in different way than a non-dyslexic person. Research indicates dyslexia has no link to the intelligence level of that person and that with proper strategies, the reading levels will improve over time (2014).

Provided is a link to a highly recommended TEDx Talk video that further explains the stress that comes with dyslexia and gives great insight to the gifts that also come with being dyslexic. The video is done by an inspiring advocate and educator of dyslexia named Dean Bragonier. According to the TEDx Talks video description, Bragonier "leads a collaborative team designed to offer authentic inquiry experiences in vocational subjects that cater to the neurological strengths of the dyslexic mind" (2015, para. 2).

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dPyzFFcG7A

How Teachers can help Dyslexic Students in the Classroom

Physically. The use of proper teaching techniques can really help dyslexic students in the classroom because they allow the students proper amounts of time to finish their work, express themselves while learning, and even begin to enjoy the learning experience. Many times, dyslexic students will require extra time to complete assignments, tests, quizzes, etc. Teachers must become understanding and willing to allow students to take the needed extended time to complete an assignment correctly (Dyslexia Center of Utah, 2014). Allowing the extra time will help these students work through problems to completely understand what the questions are asking and answer it to its fullest extent. Another teaching technique commonly use with dyslexic student involve writing in sand at younger age. This allows kids to feel out the correct way to shape letters. A third teaching technique involves the use of technology. Technology is a way to approach reading and writing that allows students to explore different forms of text, practice spelling, and read along stories that include audio text to help proofread and comprehension. A full annotated list of suggested sites to visit is provided in appendix B.

Ways to potentially help dyslexic students in the classroom:

- Covering parts of the text, only allowing the student a small portion to view
- Use rulers to follow lines more easily
- Graphic organizers for each chapter read.
- Highlighted strips of various colors to ease the brain stress
- Repeated readings
- Previewing questions and new vocabulary words
- Highlighting

Emotionally. Teachers can help to emotionally support their dyslexic students by meeting their academic needs. To meet their academic needs, teachers should provide inclusive classrooms behaviors that offer a least restrictive environment to the students. Teachers must also provide activities that are proven to help students with dyslexia increase their reading abilities. Remember that most students are struggling to fit in and bullying is often a result of students who struggle to read and write. Teachers should provide words of affirmation and encouragement to dyslexic students in order to reassure that these students hard words is not for nothing and will pay off for them in the long run.

How Parents can help their Student at Home

Reading aloud with your student will help students improve their confidence when reading on their own. Confidence is essential for any students to improve a task they struggle with. When finding books to use, make sure to choose books at the students instructional reading level. It is important to communicate with your school to find out your child's reading level. If books are too difficult for your student, this could negatively affect their confidence levels so be sure to monitor as students read aloud how much they are struggling. To help your student improve their confidence, consider reading *The Wild Book* by Margarita Engle (2011) to them as they follow along. The main character, Fefa has what they describe as word blindness (dyslexia). She sees a doctor who tells her she will never learn to read or write. She tries and tries but the letters just become chaotic jumping all over the pages. Her mother then gives Fefa a blank book, so she can fill it with many words each day, but soon her family becomes threatened and it is up to Fefa to save them.

Dyslexia is known to heavily impact a student's writing ability because of the effort it takes to out write words. This could cause meaning and organization to be lost. It is not uncommon for a student's writing to be completely different from what that student meant to say (Teaching Writing to the Dyslexic Student, 2016). Grammar and organization tend to be lost first in a dyslexic's writing. Grammar rules should be taught in a step by step process, one rule at a time and writing out a graphic organizer or list of ideas before writing is a strong way to help students organize their work. As stated in the article Teaching Writing to the Dyslexic Student, Students should practice their writing ability because this is their greatest chance to improve their spelling, grammar, and organization (2016). (See appendix A for an extended list of writing prompts.)

Another at home technique that help dyslexic students and many struggling readers include incorporating technology into home reading practices or practicing writing prompts that are fun and enjoyable to students. Lots of struggling readers experience frustration when asked to read a book. This is normally due to finding reading more difficult than fun because comprehension of the text is so limited. If reading is made more interesting for students, then students would be more willing to read. There are many websites available for students to use to practice their reading. A full annotated list of suggested sites to visit is provided in Appendix B. Students would also enjoy writing practice if their prompts were more interesting and relatable to the students. An extended writing prompts list is provided in Appendix A.

Teacher Interviews

I felt a teacher perspective was essential to the progression of this project. I was able to personally interview one mathematics teachers (certified in reading and writing education) and one English teacher in order to gain insight on their perspectives on dyslexia. I was able to interview each teacher on time. The mathematics teacher I interviewed orally and the English teacher I interviewed by email. I am presenting the exact questions and responses from the interviews. Both teachers offered similar views on how important reading comprehension is to the success of their students. The English teacher stated, “Basic strategies and skills is my number one goal for instruction [and] the foundation [for comprehension] needs to be grounded”. These points are emphasizing the importance of reading comprehension. The mathematics teacher expresses how important comprehension is for the students to be able to state their own opinions, draw conclusions, and use textual evidence. This teacher further explained that these techniques require the students to have a deeper understanding of the text, which is done through create reading comprehension strategies.

Northeast Ohio 6th grade English teacher:

- 1) Approximately how many students do you encounter with extremely evident reading disabilities each year.

“The number of students I encounter with extreme evident reading disabilities can vary each year. I have been partnered with an Intervention Specialist for the last 3 years and yes, we have an occasional extreme case. We have many with minor reading disabilities.”

- 2) What types of strategies do you find work the best for students who struggle to read? Please explain.

“Strategies I find useful with struggling readers:

- Covering parts of the text only allowing the student a small portion to view
- Use rulers to follow lines more easily
- Graphic organizers for each chapter read.
- Highlighted strips of various colors to ease the brain stress”

3) Do you find that students are becoming less interested in reading in recent years?

“Interest in reading has become significantly reduced due to use of phones/social media although there are so many wonderful young adult authors. Reading at home is not Modeled due to busy schedules”

4) How important is reading well with comprehension for students at this age level?

“READING COMPREHENSION IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AT THE 6TH GRADE LEVEL. Basic strategies and skills is my number one goal for instruction. The Foundation needs to be grounded with strategies as the reading levels and content Information becomes more demanding as they progress through the next grade levels”

5) How does dyslexia play a role in your classroom? Please explain.

“Dyslexia is an extremely difficult disability to identify. I have had very few cases of Diagnosed Dyslexia. But those students already had the working strategies in place And I took my cue from them”

6) Please feel free to add any comments, questions, or concerns you have involving this project.

“There are so many resources out there now to assist in the reading difficulties. Each Student has very unique problems and there are many ways to address. These are A few that are used: Wilson, Orton Gillingham, Reading Recovery, LLI, Early Interventions are most effective.”

Northeast Ohio 5th grade Mathematics teacher:

- 1) Approximately how many students do you encounter with extremely evident reading disabilities each year.

“It depends on the year. Sometimes we only have 1-2 students that have significant reading disabilities, other years 10-15. Teaching 5th grade, many students have already been identified and placed on an IEP. We do encounter a few students that we recommend to go to testing after interventions are unsuccessful in making the progress we expect to see. Most of the students we recommend to be testing show a reading disability.”

- 2) What types of strategies do you find work the best for students who struggle to read?

“It’s been awhile since I’ve taught reading, but successful strategies have been repeated readings in which the student reads a page multiple times throughout the week to improve on fluency and comprehension. We would use a lot of previewing questions and new vocabulary words to make sure they knew what to look for while reading. Highlighting where important information is in the text. Using readers to help stay on the correct line. Most important is to find the right level of text for the reader to be successful – hopefully something they are interested in. This definitely helps with motivation and confidence.”

- 3) Do you find that students are becoming less interested in reading in recent years?

“Yes and no... I think the students who find books that interest them, really enjoy reading. Those that haven’t found the right books yet are less interested. The groups of students I’ve had the last couple of years seem to really enjoy reading for pleasure.”

- 4) How important is reading well with comprehension for students at this age level?

“Very important!! Much of what is done in all the classes requires deeper comprehension. No longer are students only asked literal questions on what was read. Students need to be

able to support opinions and answers with textual evidence and reasoning. This requires that deeper understanding of the text.”

5) How does dyslexia play a role in your classroom? Please explain.

“I have not had a lot of experience with students diagnosed with dyslexia. I teach math, and have only had a small handful of students who would not write the correct number – wrote them backwards 6 and 9, etc. Most of the time I could figure out what the student was trying to write. I would ask for clarification if needed. I saw it more in reading. They struggled with comprehension because fluency was low. It took them longer to decode the words because they were so carefully concentrating on what the letters were. I’ve had more experience with other more general reading disabilities. We would reread texts, read them aloud together, preview questions together, etc. I wanted to make sure those students felt successful.”

It is important for teachers to have an understanding of what dyslexia is in order to help those who have it. “Interest in reading has become significantly reduced due to use of phones/social media although there are so many wonderful young adult authors. Reading at home is not modeled due to busy schedules” (Teacher Interview, spoken word). A lack in interest in reading would likely lead to dyslexic students struggling more in the classroom. It is important for parents of every child, dyslexic or not to encourage children to practice and improve their reading abilities, especially in their developmental stages of life. Not doing so is especially harmful to dyslexic students as they will almost certainly fall behind in class and perhaps stifling their learning.

It is important that teachers are able to identify dyslexia in their students as it is almost a certainty that they will encounter students who suffer from it each year. Teachers should also be able to go beyond identification, and have the knowledge required to help build strategies to counter it or work with strategies that have already proven to be successful.

A Personal Story

I was told from a young age that dyslexia is not something you can grow out of, but with hard work you can learn to how to cope with it. I continuously felt stressed out, overworked, and pushed to my limit. I had to study, practice my reading, and spend twice as long on my homework as the average student because I simply could not read as well as other students. I had after school tutoring that assessed my reading and workshops that assessed my growth every day. As a young student, approximately kindergarten through fifth grade, I was not able to balance too many different things at once. However, after working as hard as I did back then, I am now able to balance three jobs and achieve a 4.0 throughout college with honors.

It was my first-grade teacher who was a wonderful, kind woman that first recommended I be tested for dyslexia at Akron Children's Hospital, where I was officially diagnosed. She saw her young first grader crying in the back of the room during a short test when she decided to take me out into the hallway to ask what was wrong. She did not assume I was lazy or did not want to take the test, as many teachers mistakenly do, but simply asked why I was crying so she could actually do her best to help me. I was young at the time but managed to tell her that I could not read what the questions were asking. My teacher then took my completely blank test and read each question aloud. To her surprise, I received a 100% on this test once I was able to answer the questions verbally. As it turned out, most of my stress came from not comprehending readings unless it was read aloud to me.

In a math class, I would complete 50 math problems, but when you complete 50 math problems incorrectly, all you've done is memorized the wrong process while doing it. As a teacher, I feel assigning students less problems to complete on their own and then allowing the opportunity to discuss them in class with their peers is a better way to understand others thought processes. Seeing multiple ways to do the same problem and spending time explaining the conceptual meaning behind why a problem is done in a specific way will benefit all students, not just dyslexic students further down the road. If the students want or need extra practice to study or to keep from falling behind, I would provide the opportunity to practice lots of math problems with answer keys, so they can check their work instead of learning it incorrectly. Mistakes are not something to be ashamed of, in fact more learning happens when you realize you've made a mistake. It is more important that the students have conceptually learned the material correctly.

This project has provided the opportunity to do significant research regarding dyslexia. I have learned more and more about myself and what type of an educator I want to become. I will be able to provide my students with the physical and emotional support they need to perform their best as a student. I will use words of affirmation and encouragement as they work hard in my class. For me, I may end up in middle school grades, which will allow me to teach students who may have "fallen through the cracks" and continue to go undiagnosed. With these and all students, it is important to remember simple adjustments I can make to my classroom, such as reading aloud questions and providing extra time to those who require it.

Additionally, if I were to give advice to a teacher of dyslexic students, I would suggest having small group discussions because they are a less stressful but still an effective way to teach students. I believe assessments can be a good thing; they give insight to how students are

improving or where they need extra attention. Teachers however, need to recognize that giving an overwhelming amount of homework, tests, and assignments is not an effective way to teach. I was lucky enough to have a very strong relationship with my teachers and tutors, but most dyslexic students fall through the cracks and end up dropping out of high school when they come of age. This connection I had with my teachers was what allowed me to push myself through. As a teacher, it is your responsibility to make these types of strong relationships with your students and help them to fully understand the material they struggle with. Remember to allow your students to embrace the mistakes they make and learn from them. Overall, dyslexia is not something I am ashamed of; I embrace it and use it as a tool to encourage young students with dyslexia to continue their education.

Conclusion

What I learned throughout my research of dyslexia is that there are many ways to help dyslexic students both in a classroom environment and during their time at home. The most important information that I acquired is that dyslexia is most manageable is caught early on in a child's early developmental stages (ages 4-11). There are a few signs that a child may be struggling with dyslexia including a delay in learning to speak, confusing directions, and difficulty reading. It is important that dyslexic students receive assistance from their parents at home in order to give them a better chance of compensating for their reading deficiencies in school. This can be done many way, including repetitive reading, the use of rulers, and highlighting. The earlier a student is diagnosed, the quicker both the teacher and the parents can begin to assist in overcoming it.

Appendix A

Writing Prompts

This extended list of writing prompts was put together by Ms. Stewart, a senior Middle Childhood Education major at The University of Akron.

1. Write a thank you note to a friend who gave you onion and garlic-flavored chewing gum.
2. Draw an imaginary constellation. Write a story such as ancient people might have told about it.
3. Describe a real made-up dream or nightmare.
4. Write about your favorite childhood toy.
5. Write out the best or the worst day of your life.
6. Finish this thought: if I could change one thing about myself
7. When I raise children, I'll never...
8. I have never been more frightened than when...
9. Persuade a friend to give up drugs.
10. Five years from now, I will be...
11. Write about a day you'd like to forget.
12. Invent and describe a new food.
13. Describe an event that changed your life forever or make up and describe an event that would change your life forever.
14. Describe someone who is a hero to you and explain why.
15. Write about a time in your life when you struggled with a choice and made the right one.
16. Imagine yourself in a different century and describe an average day in your life.
17. Which character from a book would you most like to meet and why?

18. Three goals I have set for myself are...
19. What would you do if 300 mice had just gotten out of their cages in a pet shop where you worked?
20. What would you do if you were locked inside your favorite department store overnight?
21. What would you do if you woke up one morning to find yourself invisible?
22. What would you do if you were able to communicate with animals?
23. What would you do if you could travel into the future?
24. What would you do if you could travel into the past?
25. What would you do if someone just gave you \$1 million?
26. What would you do if all the electricity in the world just stopped?
27. What would you do if you could travel free anywhere in the world?
28. What would you do if the dinner served to you in a fancy restaurant came with a fly in the mashed potatoes?
29. Write a list of at least 50 things that make you feel good.
30. Describe the perfect day. Put in as many details as you can. Make it a possible day, not a "dream day."
31. Who is the person from history that you would most like to meet and talk to? Why?
What would you like to ask?
32. Who is the person from literature that you would most like to meet and talk to? Why?
What would you like to ask?
33. Compile a list of words that describe you as a child. Compile a second list that describes you as you are now. How are these lists the same? How are they different?

34. Compile a list of inanimate or animate objects to which you might compare yourself metaphorically. (I am a windmill. I change direction or my thoughts whenever someone talks to me...)
35. Tell about what triggers anger in you or someone else.
36. Invent a monster and describe it. Tell where it lives, what it eats, and what it does.
37. What is your favorite kind of weather? Why?
38. What is the best book you have ever read? Why did you like it? Did reading the book change you in any way? What way?
39. Write about what you didn't do this weekend.
40. Think about an incident that happened to you and exaggerate in the telling. Make it into a tall tale.
41. If you were ruler of the world, what things would you banish absolutely for all time (rain on weekends, eggplant, and so forth)? Make a list. Use your imagination.
42. If you could go back in time anywhere and "anywhen," where/when would you go and why?
43. What law would you like to see enacted which would help people? How would it help?
44. What commercial on TV do you dislike beyond all others? What about it is particularly annoying to you?
45. Design some gadget, machine, building, or other creation that might enrich the future. What does it look like? What does it do? How does it function? In what ways might it benefit people?
46. What current fashion in clothing do you particularly like or dislike? Explain.

47. Convince someone why music or art or computers are important in your life. Make them appreciate your viewpoint.
48. If you had \$100,000, how would you spend it?
49. Be a building you know well. Talk about your life and memories.
50. You are to tell a person from a distant planet or from another era what pollution is. Make that person understand what causes it and why it is bad.
51. If you could do something that you never have done before, what would it be? Why would you want to do it?
52. Begin a list of questions that you'd like to have answered. They may be about the future or the past.
53. What do you consider your greatest accomplishment to date and why?
54. Write one characteristic or habit about yourself that you like and describe it. Or write about one thing you don't like about yourself.
55. What is your hobby? Why do you enjoy it?
56. If you could go somewhere where you've never gone before, where would you go and why?
57. What's, if anything, would you be willing to fight or even die for? Explain your answer.
58. If you could change one thing about the world, what would it be? Why would you make this change?
59. Is there a machine you feel you could not live without? Explain.
60. Write about what you think you will be like and what you will be doing 10 years or 20 years from now.
61. Did you ever stick up for someone?

62. Describe your neighborhood bully.
63. Write about a babysitting experience.
64. Describe a great fort you built for a great game you played as a child.
65. Write about an enemy who eventually became your friend.
66. Write about a time you cheated and got caught.
67. Write about a privilege you earned.
68. Write about the stray animal you brought home.
69. Did you ever send away for something that turned out to be a disappointment? (Or order something over the Internet)
70. What is it like to go shopping with your mother?
71. Write about a time you performed in front of an audience.
72. Write about a difficult decision you had to make.
73. Write about learning to skate, to ride a bike, to climb a tree, or to turn a cartwheel.
74. Did you ever get lost in a strange town?
75. Were you ever locked in or out? What did you do?
76. What was it like to spend your first night away from home?
77. What was it like to come back home after a long vacation?
78. Write about a disappointment.
79. Write about something minor that turned into a big deal.
80. Did you ever win or lose a contest? Tell the story about what happened.
81. Write about something you desperately wanted when you were younger.
82. Did you ever know someone who had "everything"?

83. Write about the time as a child you played in one of the following: treehouse, a cornfield, a construction site, a junkyard, an abandoned house or barn, a stream, a cemetery, a swamp, a pasture, railroad tracks.
84. Did your mom or dad ever make you wear something you hated?
85. Write about a time you were talked into something and you regretted it.
86. Were you ever in a helicopter, limousine, race car, hot-air balloon, submarine, or horse-drawn carriage?
87. Did you ever forget something important? What happened as a result?
88. Write about an experience in a hospital.
89. Were you ever accused of something that you didn't do?
90. Write about a disastrous trip or vacation.
91. Were you ever given a responsibility that you couldn't handle? journal writing prompts
92. Were you ever in a fire, flood, tornado, or hurricane?
93. Describe the best concert you ever attended.
94. Write about a window you broke or something valuable you lost.
95. Did you ever catch fireflies? Crickets? Frogs? Snakes?
96. Write about a time you tried to help and ended up making things worse.
97. Did you ever break an important promise?
98. Write about moving to another city or neighborhood.
99. Describe an outdoor game you used to play in the summertime.
100. Write about building sand castles or mud pies.
101. Did you ever meet a famous person?
102. Write about mowing the lawn, burning leaves, or weeding the garden.

103. Describe the club you organized as a kid.
104. Describe a car or bicycle accident you were in.
105. Write about being a misfit.
106. Write about a day spent in another country.
107. Write about a time you outsmarted someone.
108. Write about going shopping for new clothes.
109. Did you ever turn someone in or tell on someone and feel bad about it later?
110. Imagine that you are an animal in the zoo. What type of animal are you? How do you feel about living there? How do you feel about people that visit and watch you?
111. Write about a time your parents embarrassed you.
112. Describe learning something from a friend.
113. Write about a time you gave someone good advice.
114. Write about the funniest thing that ever happened to you.
115. If you had to escort a visitor from outer space for a 30-minute tour of your community, where would you begin and end?
116. Be a grape that becomes a raisin: describe how it feels to shrink, to shrivel, to become dry and wrinkled.
117. Be an icicle that becomes water. Describe how it feels to be cold and firm and full of beautiful crystals but only to melt and lose your shape.
118. You go to the store with your parents and baby brother. Your parents go into a store and tell you to watch your brother. You take your eyes off your brother for just a minute and you can't find him. You...

119. I really hate it when my mother/father/sibling...
120. What if the use of robots in school becomes a workable reality?
121. What would you pack in your suitcase if you could not go home again?
122. You have just met an alien from another planet. He wishes to take a student back to his planet. Convince him you would be the perfect specimen for him to take.
123. If you could change one law, what law would it be and how would you change it?
124. How forgiving are you when a friend lets you down? Explain. Give an example.
125. What if you were named principal for the week? What would you do?
126. If you could only speak twenty words for the rest of your life, what words would head your list and why?
127. It started out as an unusual Monday morning, when I...
128. As I approached the deserted house at the end of the road, I saw...
129. Do you think girls are raised differently from boys? If so, in what ways?
130. Do you think you are treated differently because you are a boy or girl?
131. Do you think men and women are equal in today's society? Why or why not?
132. Do you think a woman will be President of the United States in the near future?
133. Two men or women have it easier in our culture? If so, why do you think so?
134. Have you ever wished you were either older or younger? What would you consider to be the benefits? The problems?
135. Describe what you think of as the typical mother.
136. Describe what you think of as the typical father.
137. Do you think women should take men's last names when they marry? Why or why not?

138. Would you rather have a brother or sister? Why?
139. Describe a fight you had with your mother. Now tell it from her point of view.
140. Write a short biography of your mother.
141. Write a short biography of your father.
142. Visualize a time when your mother was laughing. Recall a time when you two shared a good laugh over something.
143. Write a physical description of your mother. Write as if you were looking at a movie rather than a photograph.
144. Concentrate on a particular habit that your mother has and write about it.
145. If you had three wishes, what would they be? (Do not ask for three more wishes)
146. What is something special and/or different about you? Why do you think it is special or different?
147. Write about two things that your family has taught you.
148. Write about some of the things that you worry about.
149. Describe a happy memory of your family.
150. How do you know someone loves you, even if he or she doesn't say it?
151. Name one thing you like about yourself and why you like it.
152. Imagine yourself as a teacher. What type of student would you like to teach and why?
153. Name and describe a teacher who made a difference in your life. What did that teacher do that was so special?
154. What makes you proud to be an American?
155. Describe the one thing that gives you the most comfort.

156. If you could be a character in any book, TV show, or movie, who would you be and why?
157. If you had to work in any store at your favorite mall, which store would it be and why?
158. Describe the most difficult thing about being your age.
159. Describe one possession that means the most to you.
160. Who is the most important role model in your life?
161. Describe your best personality trait.
162. If you could study one subject in school that wasn't offered, what would it be and why?
163. If you had a chance to live anywhere you could, where would it be and why?
164. Write about the pros/cons of year-round school or a four-day school week.
165. Write about your favorite sport.
166. Is the school year too long? Too short? Why?
167. What does your summer usually consist of?
168. Who should be paid more, professional athletes or teachers? Why or why not?
169. What class do you enjoy the most and why?
170. Write about the worst fight you ever had with a friend.
171. If you had only one month to live, what would you do?
172. Describe your dream house.
173. Who is your favorite person to be with? Why?
174. What would be your ideal job when you grow up? Explain.
175. If you could guest star on any TV show, what would it be and why?

176. What do you think your life will be like in 10 years? 20 years?
177. Describe how you would manage your own radio or TV station.
178. What is your definition of success?
179. A saying goes, "Money cannot buy happiness." Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Appendix B

Helpful websites for teachers and parents:

<https://www.readworks.org/>

- ReadWorks is a teacher website that offers ways the address students reading comprehension gaps. Once entering ReadWorks, teachers will register and create a class code for their class to use in practicing reading skills. Readworks states it is, “driven by cognitive science research...[and]...creates world-class content, teacher guidance, and integrated tools that improve teacher effectiveness and student achievement.” This nonprofit provides K-12 reading articles, vocabulary lessons, and formative assessments for teachers to use. ReadWorks has also won many awards for their program. They are a *Charity Navigator* winner, a three-time Cool Tool Award finalist from *edtech digest*, a two-time AAP Revere Award finalist and winner, an *EdSurge* Top 10 S’cool Tools, and more.

<https://wonderopolis.org/>

- Wonderopolis is a website for anyone to access. Families can use it at home and teachers can use it in the classroom. This website aims to answer questions kids maybe “wondering” about. For example, Wonderopolis has a wonder of the day article that can be anything ranging from science to art to economics. This website offers questions regarding the articles to test reading comprehension and vocabulary knowledge. The site also includes videos, pictures, and audio recordings for the articles to help students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities participate in the online activities. This website was created by The Nation Center for Families Learning (NCFL) which is a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping adults and children learn together. Wonderopolis is a

TIME magazine's "50 Top Websites", *Parenting.com*'s "Best Kids' App" winner, winner of *Learning Magazine* Teachers Choice Award for the Family, and more.

<http://www.readwritethink.org/>

- ReadWriteThink is a family and educator friendly website that offers many high-quality practice materials in reading and language arts instruction. These materials are open for anyone to use and each lesson plan is it is aligned with the NCTE standards for English language arts. This website as partners with the International Literacy Association, National Council of Teachers of English, and of the Verizon Foundation. It provides classroom resources, professional development, videos, and many parents and after school resources to search in any area from grades K-12. Some of the most helpful aspects of ReadWriteThink are the printouts, games, and helpful how-to tips.

<http://pbskids.org/>

- Pbskids is a popular recourse for younger students and children. There are many games that will read aloud to the children as they play and also explain simple vocabulary. However, pbskids does offer learning media for older children as well, such as their articles called *Today in Science*, *Today in Social Studies*, *Today in Math*, and so on. There are also videos for parents on teaching social skills, raising curious kids, and the power in routines. The site allows children to interact with other school subjects besides reading such as art and music. This is important for dyslexic students because art and music are a more playful way for students to hone their cognitive skills while enjoying a learning environment.

<http://www.readingrockets.org/>

- Reading Rockets is a highly recommended teaching resource for both parents and teachers to gain valuable information from. The website offers many research-based strategies to parents, administrators, and teachers to help provide children with strong, confident reading abilities. There are listed suggestions for teaching reading, struggling readers, reading topics, and dyslexic readers. This site is partnered with the International Dyslexia Association. Reading Rockets offers a book finder based on your children's instructional reading level, age range, format, and interests. This site provides videos for classroom strategies and reading basics for information on how to teaching strategies in the home or classroom with students.

<http://www.starfall.com/>

- The Starfall Education Foundation is a community supported organization that provides free or low-cost experiences. According to the website, “children have fun while learning in an environment of collaboration, wonderment, and play. We teach through positive reinforcement to ensure children become confident, intrinsically motivated, and successful” (Schutz). This website is best used for students in first and second grade learning reading and mathematics skills.

<https://handsonaswegrow.com/>

- Hands on as We Grow is a simple, stress-free active site that creates lasting learning memories for children. This website provides crafts, art projects, gross motor activities, and fine motor activities for children ranging from a baby to grade school ages. There are many play activities on a theme for kids to explore. This is a website that is not specifically for dyslexic students but is listed for parents whose children may need a break from intense learning and can relax with engaging crafts that encourage a growing

mind. The activities are more hands on related and have a higher potential of interesting your students in learning.

<https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/>

- Teach Your Monster to Read is an award-winning series of games that's designed to help children to learn to read. This parent friendly website is free and there is also an app that works on multiple devices. This site is designed for pre-kindergarten through early 1st grade but would be helpful to dyslexic students because it covers letters and sounds correspondence to full sentences. This is an inactive game that takes kids on a magical journey. As the children meet new fun colorful characters, they collect rewards. According to the site, "when children are engaged, they're motivated to learn. As they progress, they rehearse a range of essential reading skills; matching letters to sounds, blending, segmenting, tricky words and reading full sentences. Teach Your Monster to Read also contains a teachers' areas with games that can be used in the classroom.

<https://www.funbrain.com/>

- Funbrain was created for kids to play learning games in Pre-K through 8th grade. Funbrain.com states, "Funbrain offers hundreds of games, books, comics, and videos that develop skills in math, reading, problem-solving and literacy" (Funbrain Holdings LLC). Both educators and parents are able to freely use this site to get a fun and safe learning experience. This site provides free books and audio books in order to practice reading skills at multiple different grade levels.

<http://www.american-dyslexia-association.com/index.html>

- The American Dyslexia Association has over 1500 free printable worksheets that aim to target different aspects of dyslexia. The worksheets address topics such as, visual

recognition, visual memory, visual sequencing, acoustical recognition, acoustical memory, acoustical sequencing, spatial orientation, body perception, symptom training for dyslexia and dyscalculia, attention span, create your own, word formulations, and dictionary. The site also explains what these topics are and if a child show weakness in certain areas, it provides worksheets that target those areas. The worksheets provide a great resource to parents and educators, but the site also explains dyslexia and dyslexia symptoms in full to parents and teachers who require additional explanation.

<http://www.dltk-kids.com/>

- DLTK's Crafts for Kids is a website that, "features a variety of printable children's crafts, coloring pages, worksheets and activities including projects for holidays, educational themes and some of our children's favorite cartoon characters" (Guenther). On this website, parents and educators can read stories to children and encourage creativity in their learning.

Appendix C

Historical Figures with Dyslexia

Provided is a list of successful people who have dyslexia and their occupations. (50

Famously Successful People Who Are Dyslexic, n.d.), (What is Dyslexia, 2013)

1. Albert Einstein – theoretical physicist
2. Orlando Bloom – actor
3. Muhammad Ali – heavyweight boxing champion
4. Steve Jobs – entrepreneur, business magnate, inventor, and industrial designer
5. Tom Cruise – actor
6. Walt Disney – business man
7. Cher – singer
8. Magic Johnson – professional basketball player
9. Tommy Hilfiger – fashion designer
10. Whoopi Goldberg – actress, comedian, author, and television host
11. Pablo Picasso – painter, sculptor, designer, poet and playwright
12. Tim Tebow – professional American football player, and current baseball outfielder
13. John Lennon – singer, songwriter, former Beatles member
14. Thomas Edison – inventor
15. Winston Churchill – British Prime Minister
16. John F. Kennedy – 35th President of the United States
17. Leonardo Da Vinci – painter, sculptor, and architect
18. Alexander Graham Bell – scientist, inventor, and engineer

References

- American Dyslexia Association Inc. (n.d.). American Dyslexia Association. Retrieved December 31, 2017, from <http://www.american-dyslexia-association.com/index.html>
- Dakin, K. E., M.Ed., & Erenberg, G., M.D. (2008, May). Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (AD/HD) and Dyslexia. Retrieved December 31, 2017, from <https://app.box.com/s/3t48u8ofwc9w3ml6yu11mydtzropz9ud>
- Dunoon, L. (Ed.). (n.d.). Dyslexia Resources | Dyslexia. Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://www.dyslexiadaily.com/>
- Engle, M. (2014). *The Wild Book*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
- Funbrain Holdings LLC. (1997). Games, Books, and Videos for Kids. Retrieved December 31, 2017, from <https://www.funbrain.com/>
- Guenther, L. (1998). DLTk's Crafts for Kids. Retrieved December 31, 2017, from <http://www.dltk-kids.com/>
- J. (2015, May 12). Hands on As We Grow. Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://handsonaswegrow.com/>
- Hatch, S. (2014, January 30). Facts about Dyslexia. Retrieved December 31, 2017, from <http://www.dyslexiacenterofutah.org/dyslexia/facts/>
- Institute of Education Sciences. (2017, May). Children and Youth with Disabilities. Retrieved December 31, 2017, from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator_cgg.asp
- National Center for Families Learning. (2010). What Are You Wondering? Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://wonderopolis.org/>
- National Council of Teachers of English. (2017). ReadWriteThink - ReadWriteThink. Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <http://www.readwritethink.org/>

- Pinterest. (2010, March). Retrieved December 31, 2017, from <https://www.pinterest.com/>
- Psychology Degree. (n.d.). 50 Famously Successful People Who Are Dyslexic. Retrieved February 10, 2018, from <http://www.psychologydegree.com/50-famously-successful-people-who-are-dyslexic>
- ReadWorks, Inc. (Ed.). (2009). ReadWorks. Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://www.readworks.org/>
- Schutz, S. (2002, August 27). Starfall Parent-Teacher Center. Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <http://www.starfall.com/>
- Slaight, J. K. (2011). Diagnosing Dyslexia Effective and accurate testing in Monmouth County. Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <http://www.dyslexiacoachnj.com/Diagnosing/default.html>
- Society for Neuroscience. (2004). Dyslexia: What Brain Research Reveals About Reading. Retrieved February 10, 2018 from <http://www.ldonline.org/article/10784/>
- Stewart, D. (2017). Middle Childhood Education, The University of Akron. Writing Prompt Ideas. Retrieved November 2017.
- Teacher Ideas. (2015, April 05). Retrieved December 31, 2017, from <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/293367363203217600/>
- M. (2016, October 01). Teaching Writing to the Dyslexic Student. Retrieved December 30, 2017, from <https://homeschoolingwithdyslexia.com/teaching-writing/>
- T. (2015, November 24). The True Gifts of a Dyslexic Mind | Dean Bragonier | TEDxMarthasVineyard. Retrieved December 31, 2017, from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_dPyzFFcG7A
- The Usborne Foundation. (2012). Teach Your Monster to Read. Retrieved December 30, 2017,

from <https://www.teachyourmonstertoread.com/>

WETA. (Ed.). (2001, December 14). Reading Rockets | Launching Young Readers. Retrieved

December 30, 2017, from <http://www.readingrockets.org/>

WETA. (2007). All About Adolescent Literacy. Retrieved December 31, 2017, from

http://www.adlit.org/strategy_library/

WGBH Educational Foundation. (1994, July 11). PBS KIDS. Retrieved December 30, 2017,

from <http://pbskids.org/>

T. (2013, July 15). What is dyslexia? - Kelli Sandman-Hurley. Retrieved December 30, 2017,

from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zafiGBrFkRM>