

# WIN Conference: Understanding Dyslexia & Strategies You Can Utilize Today

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# Today's Tentative Agenda:

- 1) Add your name to the email list (optional to do so) if you'd like me to share this presentation with you or if you'd like me to forward you the occasional interesting article on dyslexia
- 2) Index Cards To Write Down Lingering Questions
- 3) A Little About Me ([ryant@newtown.k12.ct.us](mailto:ryant@newtown.k12.ct.us)... please feel free to contact me)
- 4) Today We'll Discuss:
  - a) What Dyslexia Is?
  - b) Early Warning Signs
  - c) How You Can Advocate
  - d) Tier III Intervention Guidelines
  - e) Evidenced Based Interventions - What the Specialists Do
  - f) Assistive Technology
  - g) The Critical Component - Emotional Well-being!!
  - h) Strategies to Try Tomorrow
  - i) Questions

# What is dyslexia?

According to leading expert Sally Shaywitz, M.D., the author of *Overcoming Dyslexia*, “Dyslexia refers to a difficulty in learning to read in a person who has good intelligence, strong motivation and who has received appropriate teaching” ...  
“Dyslexia occurs at all levels of intelligence, average, above average and highly gifted.”

<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/a-conversation-with-sally-shaywitz-m-d-author-of-overcoming-dyslexia/>

The State of Connecticut Department of Education's SLD/Dyslexia Assessment Resource Guide provides this working definition of dyslexia as resulting ...

**“from a significant deficit in the phonological processing (i.e., a persistent difficulty in the awareness of and ability to manipulate the individual sounds of spoken language.”**

<https://portal.ct.gov/SDE/Publications/SLD-dyslexia-assessment-resource-guide/introduction>

# For Our Visual Learners: From the Dyslexia Training Institute

- Dyslexia Training Institute provides education about dyslexia, interventions for dyslexia, and information about navigating through Special Education Law
- Dyslexia affects up to 1 in 5 people, but the experience varies significantly from individual to individual
- Ted Talk: What is dyslexia? - Kelli Sandman-Hurley

<https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-is-dyslexia-kelli-sandman-hurley> (4:34)

# Early warning signs?

“Most children who struggle to read are not recognized until third grade, though some are identified earlier... The earliest clues can come from listening to a child’s spoken language; a mild delay in learning to talk or a difficulty learning words that rhyme are often early indicators of a possible reading problem. A little later, difficulty learning the names of the letters of the alphabet and then the sounds of the letters may be signs of an imminent reading difficulty.”

## Parents and Teachers Can Help the Dyslexic Child By...

- “accurately and promptly diagnosed”
- “provided reading programs that are scientifically proven to work”
- “develops a lasting positive sense of himself. The critical factor is the child’s sense he can succeed. I believe it is essential to find the time to develop and nurture a child’s strengths - in athletics, drama, whatever - to view himself as a competent individual.”

\*Many theories exist that suggest different dyslexia subtypes. For our purposes today, we will be accepting the general belief that dyslexia looks very different from individual to individual.



# CT Guidelines for Tier III Interventions:

For students making inadequate progress with Tier II interventions, intensification of intervention should be considered. Educators also may consider different, more specialized interventions in some cases. The primary difference between Tier II and Tier III interventions involves the intensity and/or individualization of the intervention. Greater intensity of intervention can be achieved with a **smaller teacher-student ratio** (e.g., one teacher to three students), **a longer duration of instruction** (e.g., an hour daily versus 30-45 minutes), and **more frequent progress monitoring**. More individualized treatments would include highly explicit, systematic interventions closely targeting the needs of individual students at the students' current levels of functioning or individualized, function-based support plans for students with socialemotional or behavioral difficulties. Implementing these kinds of intensive, individualized interventions requires an especially high degree of expertise on the part of the teacher. Tier III interventionists may include general educators as well as specialists, but in either case, they require adequate training and preparation to implement Tier III interventions.

# **Evidence Based Interventions**

# 1) Orton-Gillingham Principles:

- Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic-Tactile
- Structured
- Cumulative
- Direct Instruction
- Diagnostic/Assessments drive instruction
- Reading goes hand in hand with spelling

<https://www.orton-gillingham.com/>



# Orton-Gillingham - What is taught:

- 1) Phonological Awareness (*ability to recognize and work with sounds in spoken language*)
- 2) Phonics and Word Recognition (*Sound/Symbol Association*)
  - a) Reading while tracing and saying
  - b) Spelling while finger tapping
- 3) Syllable Instruction (ex: re mote ... 're' - open syllable, 'mote' - v-e syllable)
- 4) Morphology (*arrangement/relationships of the smallest meaningful units of language... 'cats' has 2 morphemes - 'cat' is the root and the '-s' denotes plurality*)
- 5) Syntax (*how words are put together in a sentence; grammar*)
- 6) Semantics (*multiple meanings of words... 'crash'- you can crash a party, crash your vehicle, the market can crash, waves can crash over you, loud noise*)

## 2) Lindamood-Bell Instruction for Reading/Decoding - Seeing Stars



- a) Students with dyslexia have a weak symbol imagery... in other words, they are not visualizing the letters and or sounds in their head.
- b) The teacher's language activates sensory input to improve symbol imagery (i.e. "When you say list, what is the last letter you picture?")

### **3) Structured Word Inquiry (SWI):**

- \*\*appropriate intervention for students with and without dyslexia
- \* SWI - provides a logical process, based on linguistics, for developing an understanding of the underlying structure of the spelling of English words
- \* In other words... word investigations occur often rather than just assuming that English is a crazy language where few rules ever hold true
- \* By understanding the spelling, we help students with reading and spelling
- \* Latin, Greek, Old English, and French impact the English language

# Presentation by Peter Bowers, Ph.D.

General Explanation: 11:00-16:50

Examples: 24:00-34:00

<https://dyslexiatraininginstitute.org/annual-virtual-conference.html>

## 4) Wilson Reading System



- 12 Steps (52 incremental substeps) that build upon each other; requires mastery of each substep before progressing to the next one
- 10 part lesson plan that addresses: decoding, morphology, encoding, high frequency word instruction, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension
- Systematic and cumulative approach utilizing multisensory and interactive instruction
- “Sound tapping” to help segment / blend sounds
- Penciling technique for scooping sentences and passages for prosody



# What You Can Do As Advocate and Ally



# Assistive Technology for Students with Dyslexia

- **Can reduce anxiety... improve workflow... increase independence... can demonstrate future potential** (OakHillCT.org)
- **Start Simple - Low Tech:** pencil grips, different paper, adjusting font size, allowing for more white space on the page, provide sentence starters, reduce need to copy from the board
- **Higher Tech:** Google Docs (enable voice typing - go to Tools to find it); Read and Write Google is an extension and is free for teachers
- **Cool Apps for iPads:**
  - **ClaroPDF and Prizmo** - you can scan text and then it reads the text aloud (older students don't have to have a teacher read it to them)
  - **Audible or Learning Ally** - reads books aloud; most titles also have text that accompanies the audio (helps tremendously with vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension and background knowledge)

# The Critical Element: Emotional Well-being

Dyslexia often has hidden costs. Students with dyslexia may:

- \* feel frustrated or embarrassed if asked to do things that are difficult for them (reading out loud, working with a peer/peer reading group and keeping up with the group pace)
- \* struggle with day-to-day activities — playing board games (especially new games/ games involving multiple directive to juggle), independently following routines, following directions causing kids to feel self-conscious and avoidant
- \* Acknowledge struggles, praise hard work, perfection is NOT the goal / mistakes are ‘human’: “I understand how challenging that reading assignment was. I was so proud of how hard you worked on it.” “Because of your effort and positive attitude in correcting your work, the whole class will enjoy an extra 15 minutes of recess. What a great role model you are!”

## Issues with Social Relationships:

- Dyslexic children may be physically and socially immature in comparison to peers leading to a poor self-image and less peer acceptance.
- Dyslexics' social immaturity may make them awkward in social situations.
- Many dyslexics have difficulty reading social cues (oblivious to appropriate personal distance, insensitive to other people's body language).
- Dyslexia often affects oral language functioning (difficulty finding the right words, may stammer, or may pause before answering direct questions). This puts them at a disadvantage as they age, when language becomes more central to their relationships with peers.
- Difficulty remembering the order of events. Firstly, it takes him longer to learn from his mistakes. Secondly, if an adult witnessed the events, and asks the dyslexic child what happened, the child seems to be lying.

## Emotional Concerns:

- **Anxiety** - Dyslexics often become fearful because of their constant frustration and confusion in school. As they may anticipate failure, entering new situations can become extremely anxiety provoking. Anxiety causes humans to avoid whatever frightens them. However, many adults misinterpret this avoidance behavior as laziness. In fact, the dyslexic child's hesitancy to participate in school activities such as homework is related more to anxiety and confusion than to apathy.
- **Anger** - Many of the emotional problems accompanying dyslexia occur out of frustration with school or social situations. Frustration often produces anger. If children meet failure and frustration often, they learn that they are inferior to others, and that their effort makes very little difference. When the dyslexic succeeds, she is likely to attribute her success to luck. Often because of their low self-esteem, dyslexics are afraid to turn their anger toward their environment and instead turn it toward themselves. Other students will demonstrate their dysregulation in the form of angry outbursts towards adults.

# Supporting Students with Dyslexia:

## 1) Collaborate - Forming Committee

- a) Reading and SpEd bridged together
- b) Share resources and students
- c) Created dyslexia committee
- d) 4x year, testing inventory, determined the specialist in each program (e.g. -Wilson, Foundations, VV)
- e) Ensured consistency with universal practices across the district

CT Forum On Promising Practices in SLD/Dyslexia: An Overview

<http://ctserc.net/sldforum>

# Collaborating to Support Students with SLD/Dyslexia

## 2) Referral Process

- a) Dyslexia Characteristic Checklist - completed with parents at initial PPT
- b) SRBI data must be comprehensive & SRBI team has data to support these characteristics
- c) Psych, SpEd, SLP, and Reading Teacher involved in testing
- d) Dyslexia Profile Completed
- e) Universal district wide assessments

# Strategies to Try Tomorrow

- 1) **Sight Words:** “Say - Trace While Spelling Aloud- Air Write it While Spelling Aloud”; discuss your hypothesis of why they might have been written that way (SWI)
- 2) **Fluency:** Easy Text - Decodable/Independent Level (repeated readings while subvocalizing... pencil / scoop / phrase the sentences together, time themselves on the first try if they like personal competition... have them practice reading it aloud 3 times (minimum)... time their last reading to see how many more words they are reading... have them videotape their own first and last reads
- 3) **Fluency:** repeated reading of favorite songs or poems... perhaps record on an iPad so students can see their progress; try using a ‘radio announcer’s voice’
- 4) Access to **Independent Level Text** (Scholastic Book Wizard is a helpful tool for starting to level)
- 5) **Multistep Directions / Math Word Problems:** highlight different steps with different colors



Questions...

# Works Cited

<https://www.greatschools.org/gk/articles/a-conversation-with-sally-shaywitz-m-d-author-of-overcoming-dyslexia/>

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<https://www.dyslexiatraininginstitute.org/index.html>

<https://childmind.org/guide/parents-guide-to-dyslexia/emotional-support-kids-with-dyslexia/>

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