



What is Dyslexia?

An overview

True or False?

1. People with dyslexia see things backwards. T/F
2. Mirror writing is a symptom of dyslexia. T/F
3. More boys than girls have dyslexia. T/F
4. *fMRI* brain scan studies show that dyslexics' brains work differently from those of non-dyslexics. T/F

What is Dyslexia?

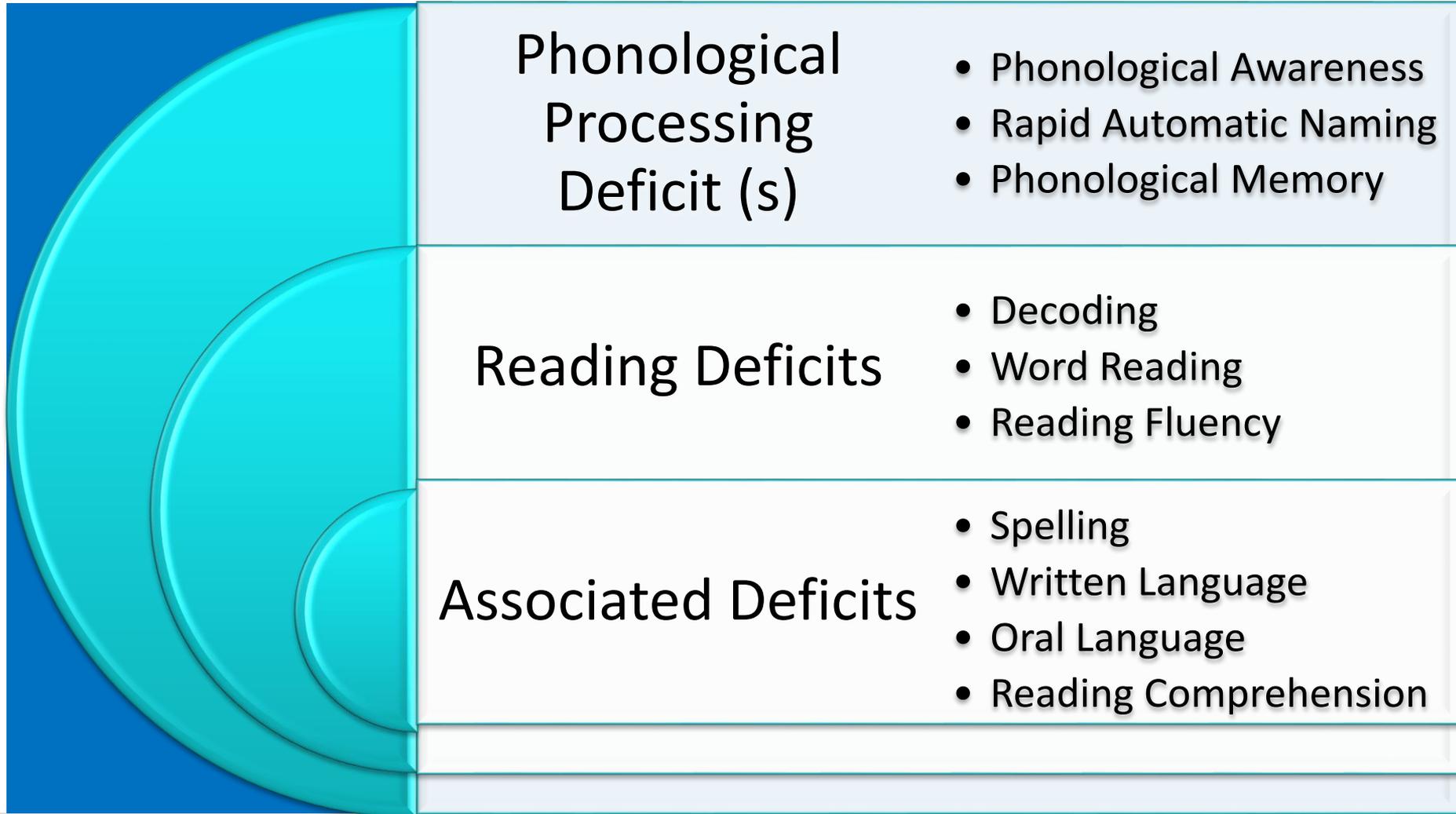
*“Dyslexia is a **specific learning disability** that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by **difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities**. These difficulties **typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often** unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction. Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.”*

-International Dyslexia Association

What is dyslexia?

- Dyslexia is NOT:
 - A medical condition
 - A clinical diagnosis
- Dyslexia is:
 - A **learning profile** used to describe phonological deficits that impact a student's decoding and spelling abilities. Students with this learning profile struggle with accurate and fluent word recognition.

Common Features



Phonological Processing and Dyslexia

Phonological Awareness

Awareness of and access to sound structure within language

- *Most common area of phonological processing deficit associated with dyslexia*
- *Responsive to intervention of the phonological processing skill areas*

Phonological Awareness



Word
Awareness



Syllable
Awareness



Within-
word
Syllable



Phoneme
Comparison



- FCRR: Essentials for Reading Success: Components of Reading: Phonological Awareness

Characteristics of Dyslexia

Students with dyslexia share some common characteristics, but not everyone with dyslexia is the same.

Some common characteristics of dyslexia include:

- Difficulty identifying or generating rhyming words (phonological awareness)
- Difficulty with hearing and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Difficulty learning the sounds of letters (phonics)
- Difficulty remembering names and shapes of letters, or naming letters rapidly
- Misreading or omitting common short words
- Difficulty with word retrieval or naming problems
- Difficulty sounding out words
- Confuses letters that look similar to each other such as p/d/g/q and m/w/n
- Many spelling mistakes
- Excellent thinking skills
- Sophisticated listening vocabulary

Not all students who have difficulties with these skills have dyslexia

Academic Impact

Oral Language

Early Literacy
Skills

READING

Written Language

How is dyslexia identified?

- Evaluations conducted by licensed psychologists or neuropsychologists
 - Intellectual functioning
 - Achievement testing
 - Word reading
 - Reading comprehension
 - Decoding
 - Spelling
 - Written expression
 - Phonological processing
 - Auditory discrimination
 - Listening comprehension

Characteristics of Dyslexia

- Characteristics can also be identified through informal assessments
 - Universal screenings measuring early literacy and/or oral reading
 - Diagnostic assessments measuring phonics, phonological awareness, spelling
 - Assessments used to align appropriate intervention

Identification vs. Characteristics

- What is the difference between dyslexia identification and identifying characteristics of dyslexia?

Interventions for students with dyslexia

It is not necessary for a student to be identified with dyslexia in order to receive appropriate intervention.

- Students should be provided with interventions aligned to needs identified through universal screening
- Students with the characteristics of dyslexia have shown success with intervention that is:
 - Intensive
 - Explicit
 - Systematic
 - Structured
 - Multi-sensory
 - Language based

Interventions for Struggling Readers

- It has also been shown that teaching kindergarten teachers how to do the intervention in their own classrooms reduces substantially the number of children experiencing difficulty in first grade (Scanlon, Gelzheiser, Vellutino, Schatschneider, & Sweeney, 2008).
- Evidence also supports Lyon's (1995) argument that some children will need more intensive 1-to-1 instruction in reading as well as in spelling and writing.
- The study by Berninger and others (2006), argued that teachers working with students with dyslexia should "keep working memory in mind," in a correlational study of 122 people with normal verbal IQ and low reading achievement.
 - The study showed considerable individual variability among the group, and, crucially, did not contrast children considered to be dyslexic with students who had difficulty with literacy acquisition but who were not considered to be dyslexic.

Interventions for Students with Dyslexia

- What are the characteristics of a “dyslexia-specific intervention”?

Services for students with dyslexia

- A *continuum of services* is available in Tennessee schools to address the needs of all students.
 - Some students are successful with minimal supports and accommodations in the classroom;
 - some need additional intervention provided through general education;
 - and others need intensive intervention provided through special education.

Determining the need for special education

- The criteria for identifying a student with a specific learning disability is established by state and federal law.
 - In Tennessee, this includes a student's response to research-based intervention.
 - Special education interventions are considered the most intensive and are provided based on a student's eligibility and his/her need for specialized instruction.
 - Parents have the right to request an evaluation to consider special education at any time, regardless of the student's participation in tiered interventions.

Access to the curriculum

- Access is the opportunity and ability for an individual to participate in the instruction, discussions, activities, products, and assessment that are provided to all students within a public school.
- Accommodations are provided to “level the playing field.”
 - They are intended to offset the effects of a disability and to provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate knowledge and skills.

Section 504

- Students with dyslexia may be eligible for an accommodation plan through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504).
- Some examples of accommodations for students with dyslexia may include:
 - extended time on exams
 - tape recording lectures
 - audio books and/or screen reading technology
 - use of smart pens or tablets, or spell check
 - giving the student a choice between print, cursive or word processing,
 - not requiring the student to read aloud in certain settings
 - scribes
 - oral testing options or prompting upon request
 - grading writing assignments for content and not for correct spelling

Additional Resources

- Center for Dyslexia | Middle Tennessee State University (<http://www.mtsu.edu/dyslexia/>)
- Decoding Dyslexia Tennessee (www.decodingdyslexiatn.wordpress.com)
- International Dyslexia Association (IDA) (<https://ida.org>)
- STEP, Inc. (Support and Training for Exceptional Parents) (<http://www.tnstep.org>)
- International Dyslexia Association- Tennessee Branch (<http://tnida.org/>)
- University of Michigan (<http://dyslexiahelp.umich.edu/dyslexics>)
- Yale Center for Dyslexia & Creativity (<http://dyslexia.yale.edu/>)

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Discussion Questions

- How would you define dyslexia to someone who is not familiar with the term?
- What are common concerns in the field on this topic?
- Did this presentation address those concerns?

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Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark on their chosen path in life.

Excellence | Optimism | Judgment | Courage | Teamwork