

The Social and Emotional Side of Dyslexia

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Background Information

There is a lot of research on dyslexia symptoms and interventions; however, the social and emotional consequences of this disorder are often ignored. This presentation explores the social and emotional impact dyslexia has on students to determine a need for social and emotional support in conjunction with interventions, and to investigate the efficacy thereof.

What is Dyslexia?

Texas Education Code definition:

- “A disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunity.”

The International Dyslexia Association definition:

- “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.”

(The Dyslexia Handbook 2018)

Academic Impact

Students who suffer from dyslexia can experience difficulties in many academic areas, including reading, writing, and spelling. The degree to which the difficulties can be experienced vary from student to student.

The Dyslexia Handbook describes some characteristics for dyslexia:

- Difficulty reading words in isolation
- Difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words
 - Segmenting, blending, and manipulating sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
 - Learning the names of letters and associated sounds
 - Holding information about sounds and words in memory (phonological memory)
- Difficulty with oral reading (slow, inaccurate, or labored without prosody)
- Difficulty spelling
- Rapidly recalling the names of familiar objects, colors, or letters of the alphabet (rapid naming)

As a result, students with dyslexia may have:

- Variable difficulty with aspects of reading comprehension
- Variable difficulty with aspects of written language
- Limited vocabulary growth due to reduced reading experiences

(The Dyslexia Handbook 2018)

Social Emotional Impact

Children with dyslexia experience many social and emotional setbacks that can affect their academic and personal lives. These symptoms include:

- Becoming frustrated with academic demands
- Becoming overwhelmed when provided with a lot of reading, writing, or spelling assignments
- Anxiety
- Low self-esteem
- Externalizing behavior
- Internalizing behavior
- Symptoms of withdrawal
- Somatic complaints
- Depression
- Social problems
- Aggression
- Delinquent behaviors

(Terras, Thompson, & Minnis, 2009) (Łodygowska, Chęć, & Samochowiec, 2016) (Doikou-Avidou, 2015) (Eissa, 2010) (Livingston & Siegel, 2018)

Music Interventions

Music and Dyslexia

This study focused on the therapeutic effects of practicing the piano on the development of a child with dyslexia.

- Student with dyslexia learned to play 12 songs over an 8-month period.
- Student made several gains both musically, academically, and socially.
- Student gained skills in reading, writing, and distinguishing musical notes, and was able to perform for an audience.
- Student showed more self-confidence and was able to control his anger as compared to the beginning of the study.

(Eren, 2017)

Learning a Musical Instrument

This study focused on the benefit of learning a musical instrument and its relationship to motivation in students.

- Student with dyslexia learned to play the tenor horn.
- Study measured the academic benefit, and the corresponding social and emotional benefits.
- Results for the study showed that the musical intervention focusing on rhythm had a positive effect.
 - His cognitive score increased by 11 points; more specifically, he had an increase in Matrix Reasoning.
 - This suggests that he may have used his new problem-solving abilities to do better in this area.

(Rose, Jones Bartoli, & Heaton, 2018)

Counselling Interventions

Positive Emotion Training vs. Psychodrama Program

- Compared the effectiveness between Fredrickson's Positive Emotion Training and Psychodrama on their ability to regulate emotions in a student with dyslexia.
- The findings determined that Frederickson's Positive Emotion Training was more effective on emotional regulation than Psychodrama.

(Sepanta, Abedi, & Faramarzi, 2020)

MindfulnessGhmarani

- Mindfulness intervention to a reading intervention (paired reading), suggesting it could improve reading fluency, academic stress, and self-efficacy for students with a specific learning disability in reading.
- There was a slight increase in successful reading after the mindfulness intervention was conducted.
- Overall, academic stress did not change after the mindfulness intervention was conducted.

(Benney, Cavender, McClain, Callan, & Pinkelman, 2021)

BAPNE Method

- BAPNE method on effectiveness in adolescent students with dyslexia at the secondary level.
 - The BAPNE stands for Biomechanics, Anatomy, Psychology, Neuroscience and Ethnomusicology.
 - It is a method for cognitive, socio-emotional and psychomotor stimulation done by teaching through body percussion.
- The goal was to provide students with developmental dyslexia an intervention that activities all brain areas that will enhance executive functions to benefit all learning processes.
- More research is needed to determine its effectiveness.

(Marcuzzi & Romero-Naranjo, 2017)

Clever Kids

- Clever Kids is a nine-week socioemotional well-being program aimed at development of upper elementary students with dyslexia.
- At the end of the study, children who attended Clever Kids significantly reduced their use of non-productive coping strategies and maintained improvement for three months after the assessment.
 - Other skills that were assessed, such as self-esteem, resilience, emotion regulation, and internalizing and externalizing symptoms, were not significantly altered.

(Boyes et al., 2020)

Family Intervention

- Perceived family support prevents the impact of negative emotional experience with dyslexia on self-esteem.
- The results suggested that adverse emotional experiences with dyslexia negatively impact self-esteem.
- Family support promoted self-esteem because it helped older adults cope with the emotional distress associated with dyslexia.

(Carawan, Nalavany, & Jenkins, 2015)

Moving Forward

Research indicates a need for social and emotional intervention for students with dyslexia. Much of the recent research describes many types of social and emotional interventions are effective; however, it cannot be generalized across multiple groups of people because of the limited samples the studies used. Some of these studies only used on participant while others used larger homogenous groups. Therefore, more research is needed to determine which social and emotional interventions are best across multiple groups of people.

(Terras, Thompson, & Minnis, 2009) (Łodygowska, Chęć, & Samochowiec, 2016) (Doikou-Avidou, 2015) (Eissa, 2010) (Carawan, Nalavany, & Jenkins, 2015) (Sepanta, Abedi, Ghmarani, & Faramarzi, 2020) (Benney, Cavender, McClain, Callan, & Pinkelman, 2021) (Marcuzzi & Romero-Naranjo, 2017) (Boyes et al., 2020) (Livingston & Siegel, 2018)

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