

De-Stigmatizing Working with Dyslexic Learners

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Abstract

In the field of writing center research there is a paucity of information regarding tutoring students with dyslexia. In addition to a lack of research and training there is another issue that arises with disclosing exceptionalities. Those studying dyslexia have found that students are hesitant to disclose their learning disability because of the stigma and feelings of differentiation from their peers (Brizee 2012). The question then becomes how we prepare tutors so they may approach a diverse group of learners and feel they have the skills to work with any student without disclosing their disability. Part of implementing the Universal Design of Learning is preparing tutors to accommodate for a range of learning disabilities, exceptionalities, and cultures. I plan to research techniques that tutors may use when working with these students and identify some of the common characteristics of dyslexic writers. Effective strategies include repeating explicit instruction, emphasizing phonetics, and mind mapping information. Additionally, I hope to eliminate some of the stigma around working with exceptional students. This project is focused on helping secondary writing center tutors and faculty to feel they have enough knowledge about dyslexia to help students who choose not to disclose their disability and offer strategies that they may utilize when working with dyslexic students. Furthermore, this project affirms the importance of creating an equitable learning environment for all students who seek the support of a writing center.

Keywords: disabilities, diversity, exceptionalities, tutoring, writing centers