

Dyslexia and the Adult Learner

*Presented by
International Dyslexia Association
MA Branch*

Angela Ayre, MS, CCC-SLP
Dinan Messiqua, MA, MEd, OG-Certified



Who are We?



IDA's mission is to create a future for all individuals who struggle with dyslexia and other related reading differences so that they may have richer, more robust lives and access to the tools and resources they need.



Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Explain common thoughts about dyslexia
2. Define dyslexia
3. Identify signs of dyslexia
4. Explain the characteristics of good intervention for dyslexia
5. Identify how teachers can support adult learners with dyslexia



Agenda

- What are common thoughts about dyslexia?
 - ❑ What is dyslexia?
 - ❑ What are signs of dyslexia?
 - ❑ What are characteristics of good intervention for dyslexia?
 - ❑ What can teachers do to support adult learners?
 - ❑ Q&A



What is dyslexia?

Take a moment to write down what 'dyslexia' means.

(Jot down response for yourself or feel free to share in Chat feature)



Dyslexia Thoughts

People with dyslexia:

- see letters and words backwards



Dyslexia Thoughts

People with dyslexia:

- aren't smart or motivated



Dyslexia Thoughts

People with dyslexia:

- outgrow dyslexia or get cured



Dyslexia Thoughts

People with dyslexia:

- are mostly boys



Dyslexia Thoughts

People with dyslexia:

- will never learn to read well



Dyslexia Thoughts

People with dyslexia:

- cannot learn more than one language

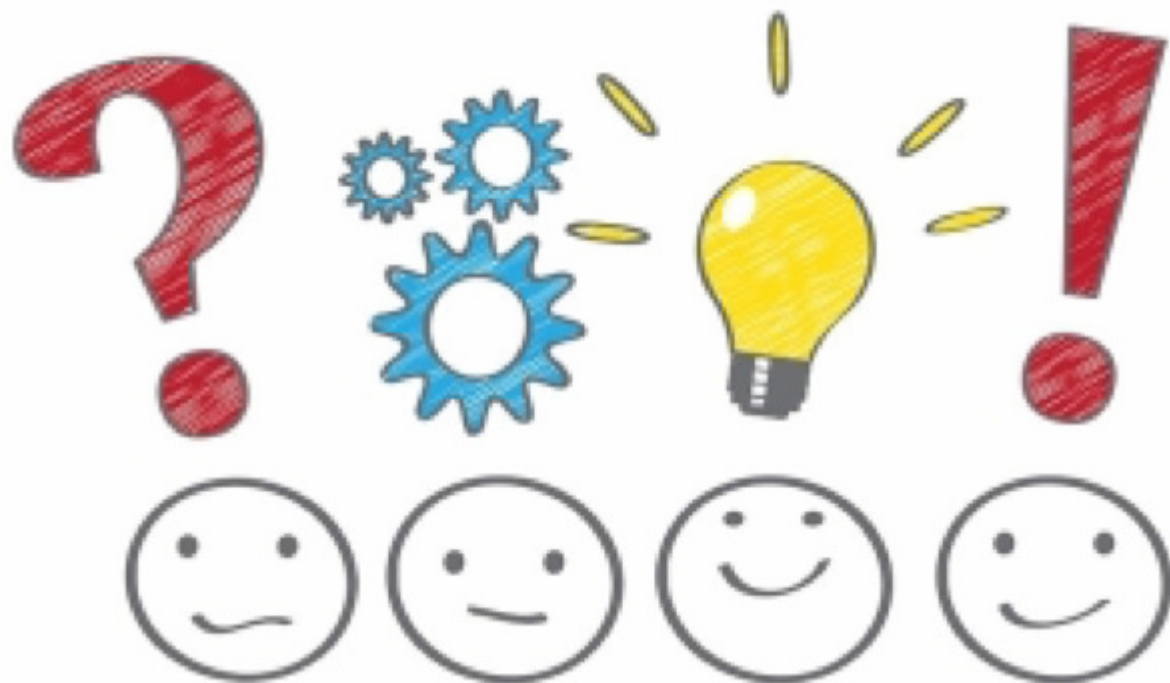


Dyslexia Truths

Dyslexia:

- is a language-based learning difference
- occurs at every socioeconomic level
- often coexists with other learning differences
- requires specific kinds of instruction

Questions?

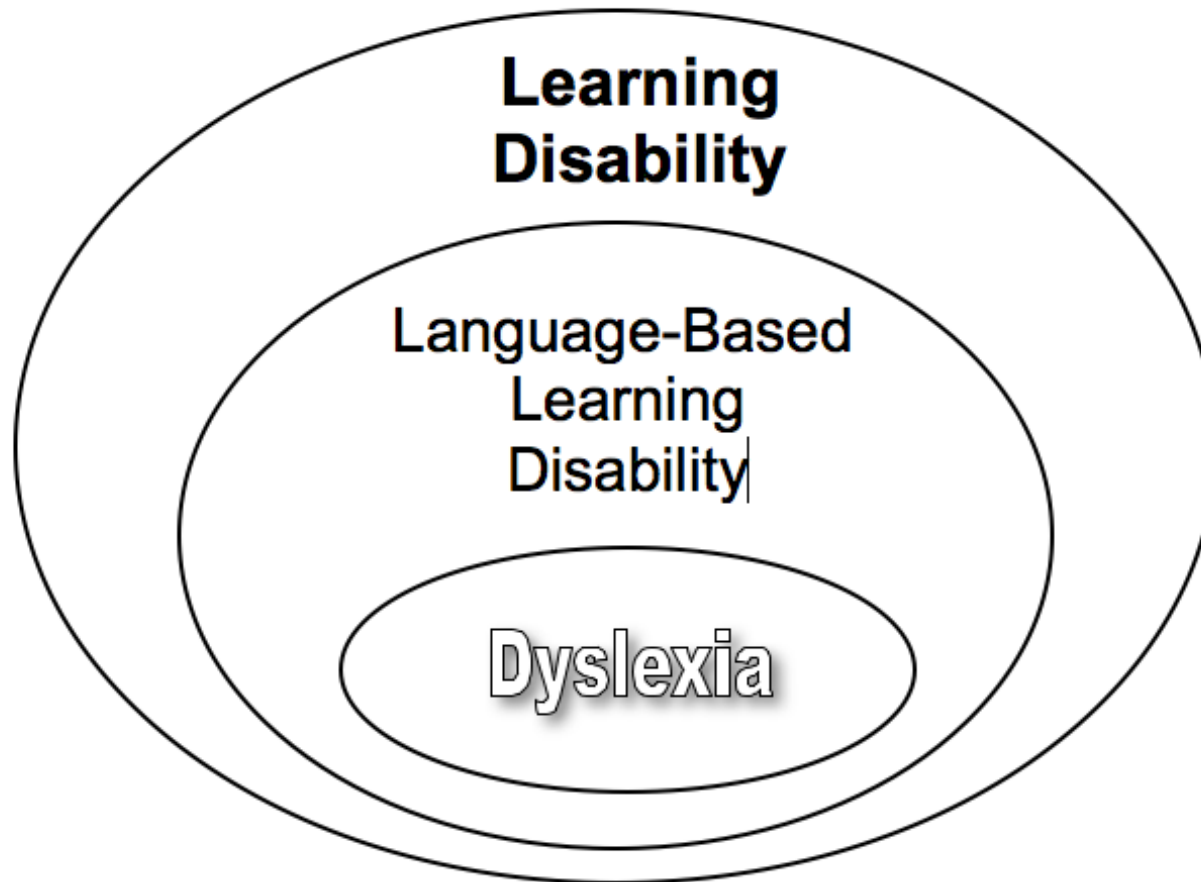




Agenda

- ✓ What are common thoughts about dyslexia?
- **What is dyslexia?**
 - ❑ What are signs of dyslexia?
 - ❑ What are characteristics of good intervention for dyslexia?
 - ❑ What can teachers do to support adult learners?
 - ❑ Q&A

Learning Disabilities: Where Does Dyslexia Fit?



Paul, R. (1995). *Language disorders from infancy to adolescence: Assessment and intervention (2nd ed.)*. St. Louis: Mosby.

①

I'm a 12 year-old girl
and for 12 years, I have
been (dyslexic). That means
when someone has some trouble
reading and comprehending. Some
people think someone who
has this dyslexis is stupid,
or unable to do things for
themself, but I (dyslexic) and
I can talk, walk, do my
homework, dance, help other
people and those are things
that any one can do. All
it means - is I have a little
trouble reading and I learn
slower.

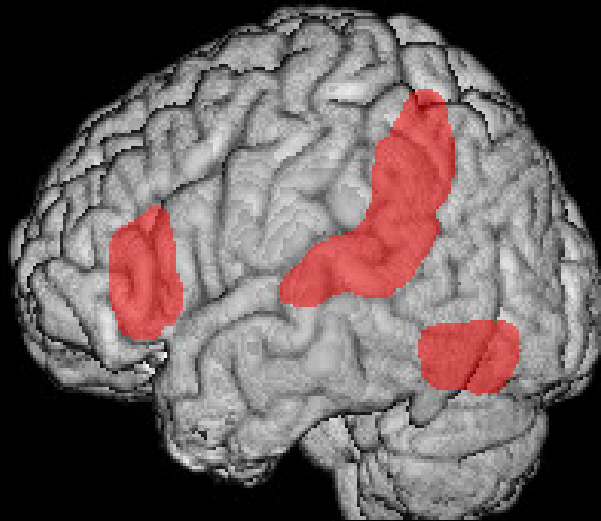


“To succeed with such extremely mixed abilities, one needs to have a deep reservoir of confidence and fortitude to carry on in spite of the judgments of others that you are slow, lazy, and stupid.”

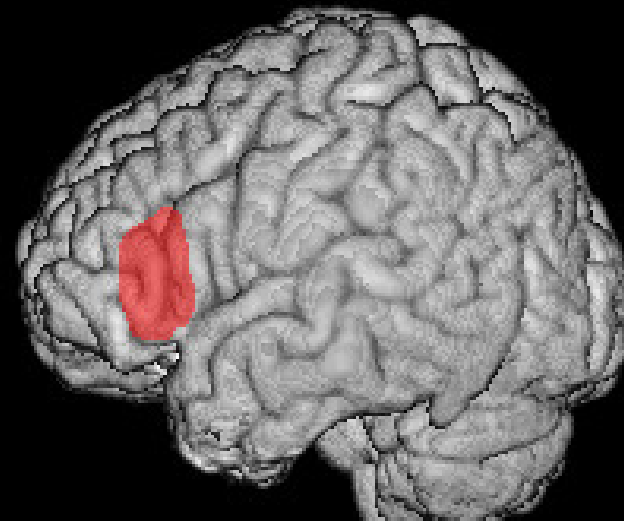
Thomas West, author

West, T. (2008). “It is time to get serious about the talents of dyslexics.”
Perspectives on Language and Literacy, 34,9.

Dyslexia in the Brain



"Typical" Brain



Dyslexic Brain

Eden et al., *Neuron*, 2004



Dyslexia Defined

Dyslexia is:

- a **specific learning disability** that is **neurobiological** in origin
- characterized by difficulties with one or more aspect of reading

These difficulties are **often unexpected** in relation to other cognitive abilities.

Lyon, G.R., Shaywitz, S.E., Shaywitz, B.A. (2003) A definition of dyslexia, *Annals of Dyslexia*, 53 1-14.



Dyslexia Defined, Con't

- Secondary consequences may include
- problems in **reading comprehension**
 - reduced reading experiences that can impede growth of **vocabulary** and **background knowledge.**



Dyslexia Defined, cont.

- Definition of dyslexia does not change based on the language of the reader
- however, dyslexia can manifest differently in different languages



What is Dyslexia?

A **specific learning disability** that is **neurobiological** in origin, characterized by difficulties with:

- Perceiving sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Decoding or sounding out words (phonics)
- Accurate and fast word reading (automaticity, naming speed)
- Memory for sounds (Phonological working memory)
- Spelling



What is Dyslexia?

A **specific learning disability** that is **neurobiological** in origin, characterized by difficulties with:

➤ **Perceiving sounds in words (phonemic awareness)**

Ex. Do 'sit' and 'map' rhyme?

Ex. Say 'cat' . Now say 'cat' without the /k/ sound.

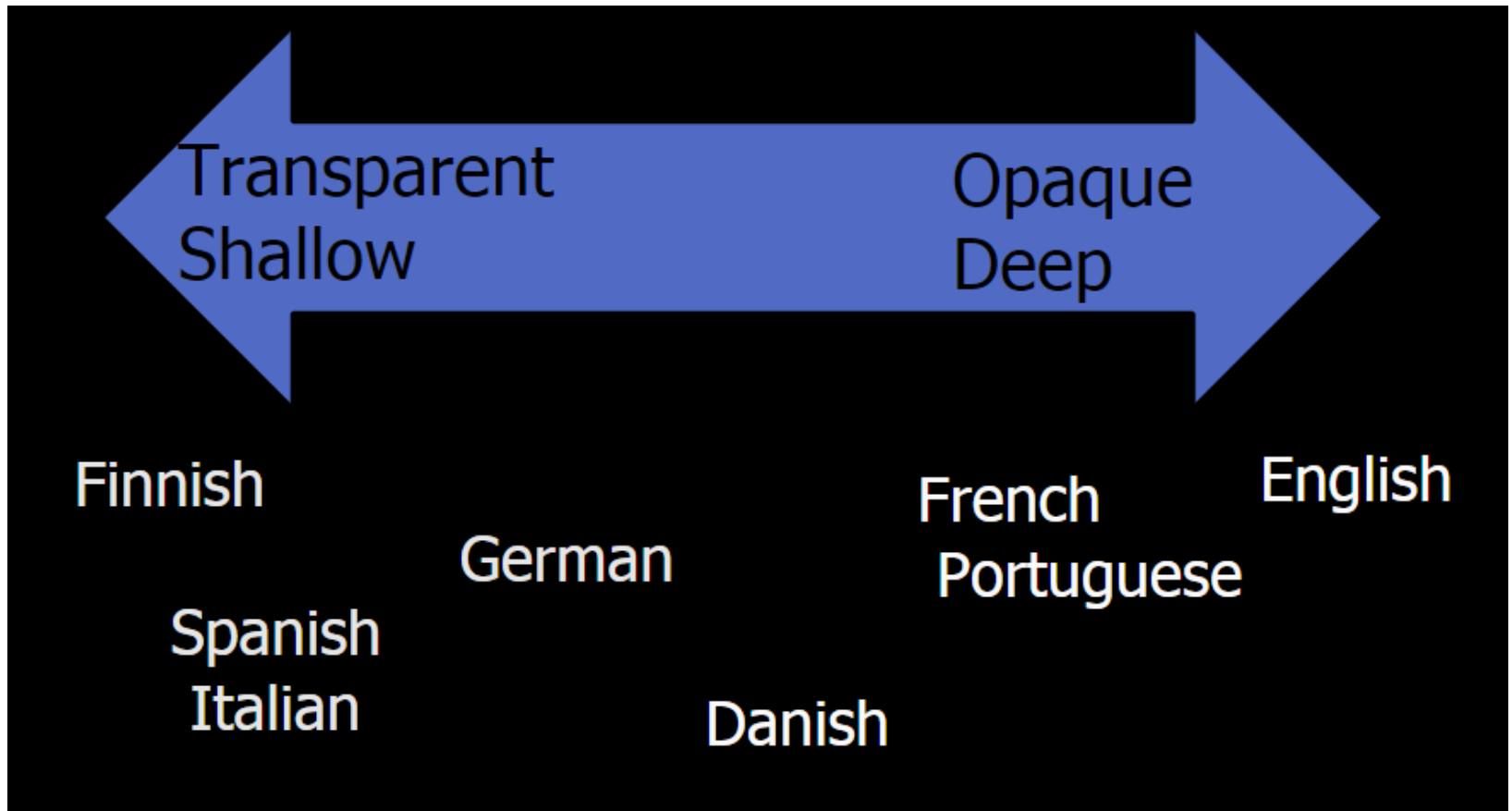


What is Dyslexia?

A **specific learning disability** that is **neurobiological** in origin, characterized by difficulties with:

- Perceiving sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- **Decoding or sounding out words (phonics)**

Phonics: Orthography



Slide from Charles Haynes, EdD, CCC-SLP, MGH IHP, used with permission



English: 7 Ways to Say A

How many ways can you think of to spell the long “a” sound?

a

baby

ai

rain

ay play

ei

vein

eigh eight



English: Words Have More Than One Pronunciation

- The bandage was **wound** around the **wound**.
- The soldier decided to **desert** his **dessert** in the **desert**.



Phonics and English: The Good News!

However, approximately 84% of English words are regular for reading *IF* you understand the structure of the language.



Phonics and Language

- Weak phonemic awareness is one hallmark of dyslexia (across languages) that underlies difficulty with phonics
- In the beginning stages of learning to read, this weakness may “show” less in the language with more predictable phonics patterns



What is Dyslexia?

A **specific learning disability** that is **neurobiological** in origin, characterized by difficulties with:

- Perceiving sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Decoding or sounding out words (phonics)
- **Accurate and fast word reading (fluency)**

Can you Read This?

TAE CAT

Adams (1990)



Can You Read This?

**TOUSEOGGSMETHODOFILLUSTRATION
EARLYGREEKWRITINGASWELLASALL
OTHEREARLYWRITINGLOOKEDSOME
THINGLIKETHISTOITSREADERS**

From: The Roots of Phonics by Miriam Balmuth, Donnelley & Sons, Inc., 1982

Can You Read This?

Pole vaulting was the third meet of the meet.
After dinner, John meet home.



Fluency and Rapid Naming

- Fluency = automatic (**fast and accurate**) word recognition and smooth reading of text with good intonation for comprehension
- Weakness in rapid naming (speed of retrieval) is another hallmark of dyslexia



Rapid Naming

s t n a k c t s c

k a n c k t a n s

t k c s n a t c n

k a s n c k s t a



Reading Fluency and Language

- Characteristics of a language can affect reading fluency and impact of dyslexia
- For example, Spanish:
 - has predictable phonics patterns
 - learning beginning reading skills easier, even if have dyslexia
 - BUT has more multi-syllable words and is morphologically complex;
 - reduced fluency has larger impact on reading



What is Dyslexia?

A **specific learning disability** that is **neurobiological** in origin, characterized by difficulties with:

- Perceiving sounds in words (phonemic awareness)
- Decoding or sounding out words (phonics)
- Accurate and fast word reading (fluency)
- **Memory for sounds (Phonological memory)**

Review: What is Dyslexia?

A **specific learning disability** that is **neurobiological** in origin, characterized by difficulties with:

- Hearing sounds in words (phonological awareness)
- Decoding or sounding out words (phonics)
- Accurate and fast word reading (automaticity, naming speed)
- Memory for sounds (Phonological working memory)
- **Spelling**



Spelling Sample: Error Analysis

This is a writing sample from a sixth grader -
what do you notice?

The tonics are very derris to the
varmint they kill birds and bug good
bugs. They get nine to the rivers
and get in the eosins. The fish eat
the toucans and we eat the fish so
we eat the poising too. And the
poising can kill us.



Spelling Sample: Corrected

The **toxins** are very **dangerous** to the **environment**. They kill birds and **bugs**—good bugs. They get **into** the rivers and get into the **oceans**. The fish eat the **toxins** and we eat the fish so we eat the **poison** too. And the **poison** can kill us.



Spelling

- Spelling & decoding are two sides of the same coin: they both rely on the same underlying skills
- Spelling reflects how the code of print reflects spoken language
- Develops in a typical, predictable sequence
- Spelling is more challenging than decoding as it heavily taxes retrieval and working memory



Spelling: Characteristics of good vs. struggling spellers

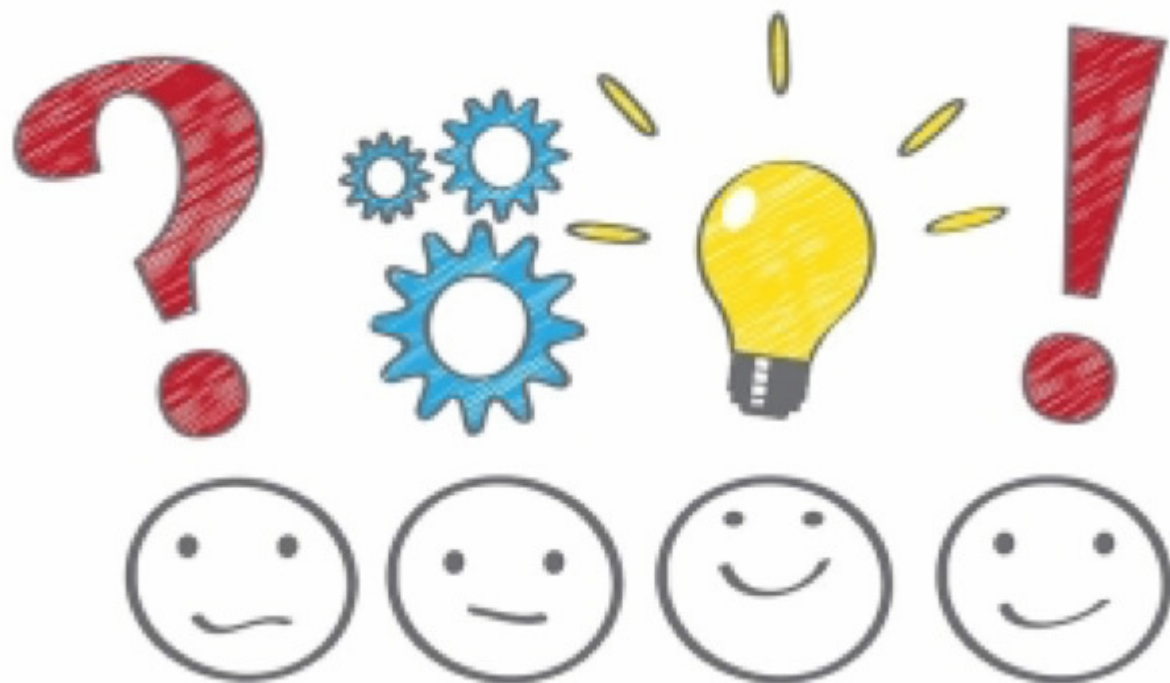
Good

- Have phonemic awareness
- Can store and recall letters & letter sequences
- Write with more precision, detail, and use more complex words
- Good orthographic memory

Struggling

- Decreased sound-system knowledge
- Decreased “flow” as lower level skills not automated
- Rely more on simpler words in their writing
- may have weaker orthographic memory

Questions?



Agenda

- ✓ What are common thoughts about dyslexia?
- ✓ What is dyslexia?
- **What are signs of dyslexia?**
 - ❑ What are characteristics of good intervention for dyslexia?
 - ❑ What can teachers do to support adult learners?
 - ❑ Q&A





Signs of Dyslexia

Based on how we have defined and described dyslexia, **what observable signs of dyslexia may be evident** as people use spoken and written language?

- What could some early warning signs be (in children)?
- What might you see in adult learners you are working with?

Early Warning Signs

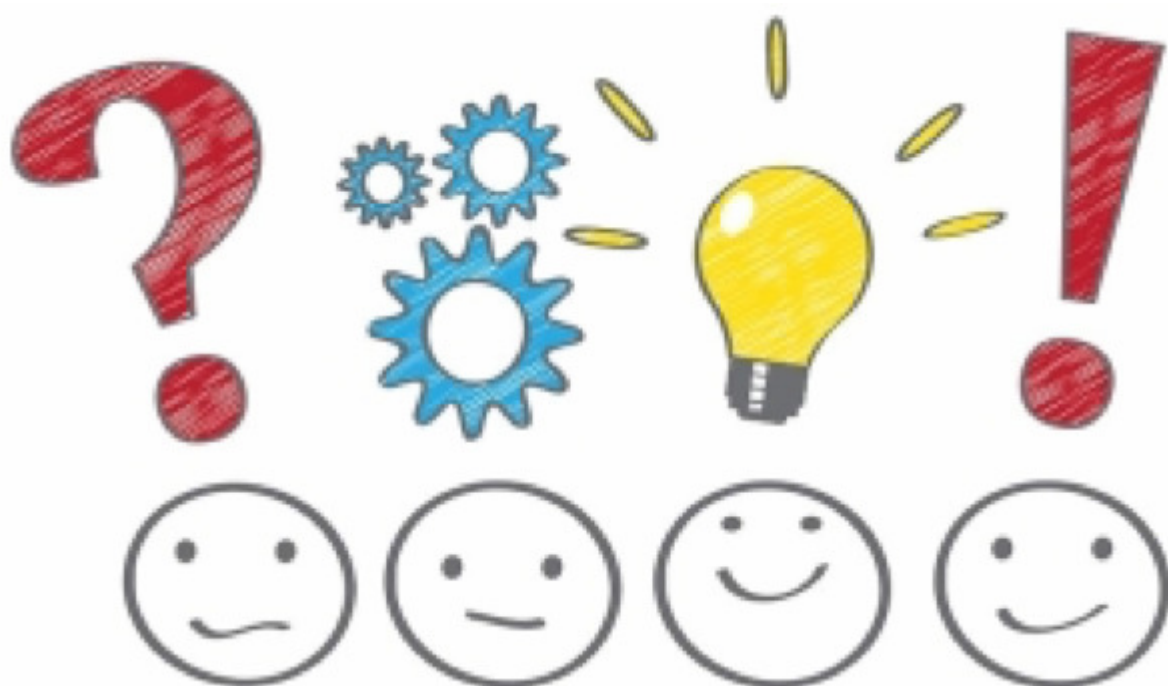
Spoken Language

- Late talker
- Slow to learn new words
- Trouble producing speech sounds
- Trouble with phonological awareness

Written Language

- Trouble naming letters, recalling sounds of letters
- Trouble learning and applying phonics (sounds of letters)
- Difficulty remembering high frequency “sight” words
- Poor spelling
- Poor handwriting

Questions?





Contact Information



IDA MA Contact:

ma.dyslexiaida.org

massbranchida@gmail.com

Angela Ayre, MS, CCC-SLP

angelaayre.com

angelaayreslp@gmail.com

Dinan Messiqua, MA, MEd, OG-Certified

dinanmessiqua.com

dinanmessiqua@gmail.com



Part 1 Review: Pop Quiz

Participants will be able to:

1. Explain 2 common myths about dyslexia
2. Define 3 aspects dyslexia
3. Identify 3 warning signs of dyslexia