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VBIDA Fall News

VOLUME 2

OCTOBER 2010

2011 VBIDA Annual Conference:



Dr. Gordon Sherman to be Keynote Speaker

The 2011 VBIDA Annual Conference will be held for a second year running at the Jepson Alumni Center, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA.

The date of the conference is Saturday, April 2nd. VBIDA is pleased and honored to have as the keynote speaker, Dr. Gordon Sherman. Dr. Sherman is the Executive Director of the New Grange School and Education Center in Princeton, NJ. <http://www.thenewgrange.org>

Before joining New Grange, he was the Director of the Dyslexia Research Laboratory at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and a faculty member in neurology at Harvard Medical School.

Dr. Sherman received his doctorate in Developmental Psychobiology from the University of Connecticut.

He is a former president of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and is a recipient of two of its most prestigious honors, the Samuel T. Orton Award and the Norman Geschwind Memorial Lecture Award. He also was inducted into IDA's Sylvia O. Richardson Hall of Honor. Dr. Sherman speaks nationally and

internationally to parents, teachers, and scientists about cerebrodiversity, learning differences, brain development.

Also presenting is Dee Rosenberg.

Ms Rosenberg has been the Director of Education at the New Grange School and Educational Center for the past ten years. She has an MA in Learning Disabilities from Montclair University and is a certified Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant. Dee has had over twenty years of classroom experience at both the elementary and high school levels.

She has worked as a special education teacher and general education teacher, and also as an educational diagnostician. She is a certified teacher trainer for the Wilson Language Program, Developing Metacognitive Skills, and LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling.)

Ms Rosenberg has consulted with many school districts, and she has trained teachers locally and nationally to improve student achievement through the use of good assessment and research based literacy programs. She has lectured nationally and internationally about improving

literacy and other issues related to special education. Ms Rosenberg is currently the President of the New Jersey Branch of the International Dyslexia Association.

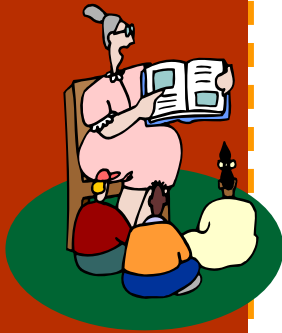
Kenneth U. Campbell will be presenting on "The Components of Reading Fluency."

Mr. Campbell is a 7th generation North Floridian who has spent his life on the front lines working with and teaching students with behavior and learning problems.

He is known for developing 'Great Leaps Reading' for a specific school and his work was discovered by Cecil Mercer through the University of Washington. Great Leaps has since spread throughout all fifty states and forty countries.

Mr. Campbell remains inspired by the words of his father, an American history teacher, "There is no higher calling than to be a classroom teacher." Mr. Campbell's presentation will cover the five components of reading: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.





...skills for teaching students with dyslexia and related difficulties.

The task of the modern educator is not to cut down jungles, but to irrigate deserts.
C.S. Lewis

Ten Things I've Learned



IDA presents New Document - *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading*

Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading

info@vbidacom receives many requests for information regarding dyslexia, but two of the most frequently asked questions are, "Which type of program is most effective for teaching a student with dyslexia?" and "What qualifications should a tutor or educator have in order to remediate a student with dyslexia?"

To help answer these questions, The International Dyslexia Association has developed a major, new document entitled, Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.

This document acts as a guide in endorsing programs that prepare teachers of reading as well as recommend programs that specialize in teacher preparation.

The document provides proficiency requirements for practical application, such as interpretation of assessments, delivery of differentiated

instruction and successful intervention with a child or adult with a reading disability.

The first section specifies what all teachers of reading should know and be able to do. The second section offers guidelines for the necessary skills for teaching students with dyslexia and related difficulties.

To review the complete document, please refer to the link:

<http://www.interdys.org/standards.htm>

Ten Things I've Learned in 10 years of Dealing with Dyslexia - by Angie Hood March 2010 (Five in this issue; next issue will have the last five)

Ten years. It is hard to believe that it has been ten years since our family started a journey with dyslexia, first for our son Alex and then daughter Kate. Alex is now 18 and a senior about to graduate from Bob Jones High School in Madison and accepted to Auburn-Montgomery for his freshman year. As Alex enjoys his last months of high school, I am thinking back on the past ten years, the highs and the lows of dealing with dyslexia.

I. Most People don't know about dyslexia until it happens in their family.

Most parents with no family experience with dyslexia miss the clues to their child's learning difficulty. Because of his mid August birthday, we had Alex do a year of half day kindergarten at our church at age five. In that year, his teacher, Ms. Debbie, thought that "something was just a little off" for Alex, but she couldn't put her finger on the problem. The next year, in whole day kindergarten in public school, his teacher Mrs. Jones said "he didn't cut and color well", but I didn't know that meant anything. I figured cutting and coloring would come with practice.

In first grade, his teacher said he daydreamed too much, and spoke off topic. I will always remember Alex's little paper fish on the classroom wall, there to represent each book he read. Alex's little fish stayed put until about halfway through the year when we were in the classroom for a conference and we saw it. There was nothing sadder than that Alex's lone fish stuck at start. The teacher thought Alex had ADD, but the school counselor ruled that out. Alex reported that once, when he was confused about what he was supposed to be doing on a worksheet, he went to the teacher's desk to ask her what he was supposed to do with his paper, and she told him, "Go sit back down and read it!" The summer between first and second grade Alex worked with a wonderful former teacher from our church, and

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she was the first to use the word dyslexia, but we didn't know how to test for it.

In second grade, at a different public school, his teacher brought us in for a conference.

Alex was excelling in math and science, but failing in reading and spelling. His teacher said she didn't know what was wrong. We didn't know either. That night, we ran into a friend from Alex's kindergarten class and we found out his little friend had dyslexia. "What is that and what are the symptoms?" we asked. Well, it sounded just like what Alex was experiencing. We scheduled testing in Birmingham for Alex at a private psychologist's office, and on the day of the testing were told he had severe dyslexia. Determined to handle the diagnosis positively, we told Alex we had good news, that he was dyslexic and that we could do something to help him. Alex was visibly relieved. The night before his dyslexia tests in Birmingham, Alex prayed that he WOULD be found dyslexic, not dumb as he considered himself. That testing also helped him to learn that he had a high IQ and was not dumb. We told Alex that God created him with dyslexia but despite that challenge, the dyslexia also brought gifts of creativity and imagination. A positive approach by the parents to the child makes all the difference in dealing with dyslexia or other learning differences. Ignoring it, hiding it or denying it doesn't make it go away. You need proper testing to know what you are up against.

2. Proper diagnosis tells you what you are up against.

Your kids know that they are having problems before you know. In the case of our younger child, daughter Kate got behind on her handwriting workbook in third grade and she admitted that she had trouble with spelling. We noticed her spelling could be creative. With Alex's history of dyslexia, we had her tested by Scottish Rite and the results showed she was not dyslexic. She plugged along, making good grades, still having creative spelling, but unlike Alex, who never catches his spelling errors, she could usually see hers and correct it. After 9th grade Kate commented again that school work was getting harder. We had her tested again by the wonderful lady at Scottish Rite and this time she was ONE point below the cutoff, and now was defined as dyslexic.

Girls do avoid detection better than boys, flying under the radar of detection with their great social and verbal skills. Listen to what your children are saying-they know! Proper testing is essential. There is a battery of tests done to get a proper diagnosis of dyslexia, not just one test. In Alabama we are so blessed to have the Alabama Scottish Rite Foundation Learning Centers provide free testing for any child who might be dyslexic. Most insurance companies do not pay for dyslexia testing and the costs for private testing are pretty high, as much as a thousand dollars. The Scottish Rite men have worked to provide materials to the public schools to combat dyslexia, provide the free testing, and to raise awareness. Those efforts are much appreciated!

3. Proper intervention makes all the difference.

Traveling to Birmingham twice a week for therapy for seven months, doing one hour of one on one work with Alex seven days a week was grueling when he was in second grade, but it was making a difference. Getting a tutor trained to work with him up here was my first mission, and then a second lady was trained. Alex did some form of working with a trained tutor until fourth grade. Multisensory teaching works, involving all the senses in learning makes a huge difference. In third grade we moved Alex to a private Christian school whose teachers immediately wanted to help and made accommodations without any question. They saw Alex as a whole person, not just an academic score. He thrived there until middle school. You want a tutor who has had training in some type of multisensory approach to dyslexia.

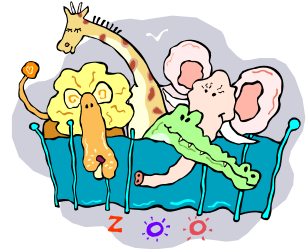


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4. Finding areas for your child to succeed gives them fun and encouragement.

From 2nd grade through 6th grade Alex worked hard, and didn't have many outside activities. Destination Imagination was one area where his creativity and thoughtful consideration helped him. He was on a DI team in fourth grade and really enjoyed the practices and the creativity competition. In 8th grade Alex asked to try home schooling, so Alex and I worked together until 11th grade, with him taking some classes on campus of the private school and some at home with me. During those 3 ½ years Alex had the opportunity to spread his wings and learn new things. Alex had a goal, starting in fifth grade, to become a marine mammal trainer at SeaWorld. He got his boating license, even though we don't own a boat. He became SCUBA certified and volunteered at the dive tank for Space Camp.

He became trained and worked one week a month in Montgomery at the Montgomery Zoo, and during the summer as a camp counselor for Zoo camp. Alex became a certified Red Cross Life guard and joined the church senior high choir. When he was 14 he joined a young men's fraternity called DeMolay, and that group taught him great skills of running meetings, planning events, memorizing large chunks of text for special ceremonies, public speaking, and working with others. He became a local leader of the chapter and then a state officer for the group. All these things boosted his confidence, as did his first place win in 5th grade in the state DAR essay contest, 7th grade's second place win in the Young Writer's fiction contest, 10th grade's regional win in a DeMolay essay contest, and 11th grade's first place win in a national patriotic essay contest. Despite his continuing inability to spell well, Alex was learning that he had gifts and skills that would help him accomplish his goals. Over and over I hear from experts that the best thing we as parents can do for our children with learning differences is to find what our child excels at and PRAISE them and encourage them in that thing. Focus on the positives, not on the failures or struggles.



5. You need tools to get the job done.

You are just going to have to deal with spelling words until your child enters middle school or junior high. Homework is always going to take a long time, because it takes longer for a dyslexic student to process written information. We found that books on tape, the word processor program on the computer, voice recognition programs, laptops, spellers, and games all help make the process of learning easier and even sometimes fun. Teach your child to have someone proof read their writing because even the spell checker on the word processor doesn't catch every misspelled word.

Students need to know that you don't write a perfect paper on the first try. Writing and revising make the paper stronger. Things that parents share at our dyslexia support group, totally unproven by research, just common sense, made a big difference. How to tackle weekly spelling words, how to handle learning the times table in math, how to improve handwriting, how to encourage a love of reading are all things we have learned from other parents, trial and error! The funniest piece of advice to help with handwriting was to get an old fashioned pogo stick. For some reason, bouncing up and down on that pogo stick helped Alex with physical coordination and that helped with the quest to conquer cursive in third grade. **More to come.....**

What is a Wiki?

Wikis are websites that you create the content. Wikis can be used for a large variety of tasks, from personal note-taking to collaborating online, creating an internal knowledge base, assembling an online community, and managing a traditional website. Here are a few:

Universal Design for Learning is a means for flexible access for all to learning planned from the onset. This wiki-site, co-constructed for a workshop, provides many resources to discover UDL.
<http://universal-design-for-learning.wikispaces.com>

Making Math Meaningful contains a number of helpful math related resources. Much of the information on the opening page relates to Virginia Standards of Learning, but resources such as Math VIDS can be found on the remaining pages.
<http://making-math-meaningful.wikispaces.com>

Harvey's Home Page contains many, many resources for teaching mathematics. Harvey's work can be used with or without interactive white boards.
<http://www.harveyshomepage.com>

Fab Five - Fab Five Plus One requires a request to enter the site but it will be quickly allowed.
<http://pbworks.com>

Verizon is also committed to supporting teachers and educational professionals. Check out the resources on this website.
<http://www.thinkfinity.org/>

