

My name is Julie Hintgen and I am a graduate student at St. Cloud State University. I decided to go back to school to earn my Academic and Behavioral Strategist (ABS) Certificate after helping my son with his challenges with dyslexia. I did not fully understand his struggles until he was in fourth grade. My son has been on an Individualized Education Program since preschool for developmental delay, however, no one had ever mentioned the possibility that he had dyslexia or a specific learning disability. Luke had almost every warning sign. He could have been helped in Kindergarten if only teachers had been informed.

I'm advocating for teachers to receive necessary training to help others like Luke starting at the pre-school or kindergarten level. When this happens, students with dyslexia can get the right kind of help before they have fallen significantly behind their peers. The solution to this problem has to include appropriate teacher training. Teachers cannot effectively help students with dyslexia if they do not have the correct knowledge and tools to do so.

Since starting my graduate program at SCSU, I have learned that many of my professors lack basic awareness of dyslexia; however, they are open-minded and want to learn more. Some professors do not want to discuss it and avoid the subject.

I am discouraged and disappointed to learn that our colleges of education aren't preparing teachers to meet these critical needs. I went back to school to learn more about dyslexia and receive valuable information to help all students learn to read. Instead, I am frustrated at the large gap of information that was missing on this subject. Instead, I have to spend a considerable amount of time and money to learn about dyslexia outside of my coursework at St. Cloud State University.

Since teachers aren't receiving knowledge about dyslexia in college, teachers need professional development on dyslexia during the 5 year recertification process.

It is imperative that we find a way to educate professors and teachers as soon as possible. There are numerous high school students with dyslexia that do not attend college or drop out because they do not know how to accommodate for their learning differences. They are so focused on their weaknesses that they overlook their strengths. These students have skills and expertise that would benefit the entire college community. In order to help these students, we must start early.