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“Easier, Not Easy:” AN UNFOLDING OF THE DYSLEXIA EXPERIENCE

A DISSERTATION APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC CURRICULUM

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the six children who spoke openly about their lives in an attempt to communicate what it is like to have dyslexia and experience this learning difference. I see each of you as brave warriors that have stayed incredibly strong through challenging times to become resilient individuals with impressive self-awareness. I look at each of you in awe, and I wonder if I would have the strength you have all shown through your journeys. I applaud your families and all families who have children with dyslexia for the perseverance and endless support that you give to ensure your children's success.

I would also like to thank Decoding Dyslexia Oklahoma for supporting this project and working tirelessly for all children that struggle to learn the literacy practices required for a productive and successful life. Your work, dedication, and countless hours to create awareness of what dyslexia is and is not, has changed the lives of many children and families.

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Abstract

This study sought to explore the experiences and perspectives of children identified as having dyslexia. This research provides insights into the importance of early and targeted intervention, so school is not experienced negatively due to children experiencing failure learning classroom literacy practices. Through a phenomenological research design, the lived experiences of six children in grades four through eight were portrayed. This research process involved semi-structured interviews and a collection of artifacts. Data analysis revealed prior to receiving intervention, the children were confused, and none of them believed they were good readers or writers. This study contributes to the existing literature by showing how early targeted intervention can help children's understanding of dyslexia, reshape their literate identity, and experience school more positively. Thematic analysis offers richer and deeper insights into what it means to experience dyslexia from two distinct time frames, before and after receiving early-targeted intervention. Findings from this study indicate that screening and progress monitoring should begin in Pre-kindergarten to ensure all struggling readers are identified that may need intervention. In addition, this study has implications for classrooms to expand literacy practices to include new ways of meaning-making with multimodal text and the use of digital literacies to support all struggling readers and writers.

Keywords: dyslexia, experiencing school, literate identity, teacher-student relationships, peers, learning differences.

Chapter 1: Introduction

All children are energized to learn how to read and write, but some children experience frustration, shame, and embarrassment as they begin their journey to become literate. For children with dyslexia their brains are mis-wired for phonologic processing, thus interfering with their learning how to decode and encode written language (Fletcher, Lyon, (Fuchs, & Barnes, 2007; Lyon, 1995; Mazher, 2012; Shaywitz, 2003; Snowling, 2013). Dyslexia is not a disease but a lifelong condition. Dyslexia occurs in every language and background, regardless of race or socioeconomic status. Children with dyslexia encounter barriers in their ability to acquire proficient literacy skills, despite average or above average intelligence and having received appropriate classroom instruction (Harrar et al., 2014; MacCullagh, Bosanquet, & Badcock, 2017; Shaywitz, 2003; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2016; Zambo, 2004). Research has identified a link between genetic factors and dyslexia (Carrion-Castillo, Franke, & Fisher, 2013; Fernandes, Vale, Martins, Morais, & Kolinsky, 2014; Nash, Hulme, Gooch, & Snowling; 2013; Shaywitz, 2003), although the exact gene or genes that cause the learning difference have not been identified (Morgan & Klein, 2000). More than 80 percent of individuals diagnosed with reading disabilities are estimated to have dyslexia (Karande, Sholapurwala, & Kulkarni, 2011). Children are diagnosed as having dyslexia most often during their early schooling years (k-3), when they are learning to read. There is no cure for dyslexia, but with appropriate interventions, children can learn to read and write and be successful in school.

Dyslexia is one of the most researched topics that affect struggling readers. It cuts across gender, age, and race (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Catts, Adolf, Hogan, & Weismer, 2005; Joanisse, Manis, Keating, & Seidenberg, 2000; Lyon, Shaywitz, & Shaywitz, 2003; Torgesen, Wagner, Rashotte, Herron, & Lindamood, 2010; Wajuihian & Naidoo, 2012).

Sophisticated uses of neuroimaging have identified phonological processing as a central deficit in children identified with dyslexia. A phonological processing deficit affects abilities to determine the constituent sounds within spoken words, such as initial and final sounds, onset and rime, and separating words into sounds and syllables. (Kilpatrick, 2015). Even when a child with dyslexia knows the individual sounds, they may not able to pull them together, which is like trying to build a bridge with support only on one side. This deficit in phonological processing manifests as a lack of ability or weak abilities in phonological awareness. Children with a problem in phonological awareness do not have a basis for learning and remembering letter sound mappings, a skill that underlies most failures to acquire alphabetic and phonological based decoding skills (Lovett, et al., 1994).

Defining Dyslexia

Dyslexia affects 17-21% of school-age populations in the United States depending on the definition used for the term or how it is categorized within specific medical or educational fields (Ferrer et al., 2015; Fletcher et al., 1994; Francis, Shaywitz, Stuebing, Shaywitz, & Fletcher 1996; Youman & Mather, 2013). Dyslexia occurs on a continuum and there is no sharp dividing line between having it and not having it. Estimates of numbers of children with dyslexia vary from one in five (Handler, 2016; Shaywitz & Shaywitz, 2016; Zambo, 2004), to one in ten (National Health Service, 2018), suggesting there is not a specific agreed upon method of categorizing the problem, or a way to measure the severity of this learning difference (Fletcher & Lyon, 1998; Snowling, 2013). Different researchers as well as federal and state policy makers use the term dyslexia interchangeably with specific reading disability, reading disorder, and language-processing disorder (Elliott & Grigorenko, 2014; Pennington & Bishop, 2009; Siegel & Lipka, 2008). What is agreed upon in defining dyslexia among scientists, educational

psychologists, and educators is that when a child demonstrates significantly low achievement at the level of word processing, the cause is due to a phonological processing deficit (Siegel, 2006; Snowling & Hume, 2012). For this study, dyslexia is defined as a learning difference, characterized by a learner's poor phonological awareness abilities, which are exhibited as difficulty with accurate and fluent word reading, decoding, and spelling abilities.

Early Intervention

Without appropriate teaching methods, accommodations, and interventions it can be difficult for a child with dyslexia to succeed academically. A child's ability to acquire understanding and functional use of the alphabetic principle is important for acquiring proficiency in grapheme-phoneme correspondence knowledge or decoding. Decoding is the primary vehicle beginning readers use for reducing the load on visual memory that is imposed by an alphabetic writing system (Vellutino, Fletcher, Snowling, Scanlon, 2004). Many children with dyslexia can get by for years memorizing many words without actually decoding them, but by the third or fourth grade, learning switches from learning to read to reading to learn. Children that struggle cannot read fast enough and begin to experience repeated failure. Instruction in phonological awareness at an early age helps all children, but is crucial for children with dyslexia, because learning how speech sounds (phonemes) map to letters and patterns within words will help to lessen reading problems (Brady, 2011; Lonigan & Shanahan, 2009; National Reading Panel Report [NRP], 2000; Wanzek et al., 2013). Early intervention to support reading development of children has been documented over years of research and practice. If children are identified with dyslexia and they receive intervention at an early age, those children can learn to read and write successfully and proficiently. According to Ozernov-Palchik and Gabrieli (2018), early intervention provided in kindergarten through third grade is extremely

effective in closing the literacy-learning gap for children with dyslexia, providing that the intervention addresses phonological awareness as their core weakness. Interventions that use a structured and systematic approach for teaching decoding, encoding, and spelling instruction for children with dyslexia is important because understanding multiple kinds of language knowledge builds competence in levels of phonological awareness (Moats, 2002; Spear-Swerling, 2014). Learning and mastering these skills early in school is important for all children, but children that have dyslexia that do not receive intervention early in their schooling to become competent in these practices often do not progress and continue to fall far behind their grade-level peers (Hurry & Sylva, 2007). By becoming proficient in the practice of decoding and encoding text, they avoid a trajectory of failure as they progress in school.

Statement of Problem

Approximately 45 million students in the United States are said to have dyslexia, yet only five out of every 100 of these students receive assistance (Harrar et al., 2014; Siegel, 2006; Zambo, 2004). Statistically, children who cannot read at grade level by third grade are four times more likely not to finish high school and one in five students with a learning difference drop out of school (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 2009). The National Center for Education Statistics (2017) shows 35% of all children with dyslexia do not graduate from high school, diminishing their future employment opportunities. Only an estimated 2% of high school students with dyslexia enroll and graduate from post-secondary institutions (Al-Lamki, 2012; MacCullagh et al., 2017; Russak & Hellwing, 2015). Dropping out of high school coupled with an inability to read and write can lead to negative effects once out of school. Nearly half of incarcerated adults do not have a high school diploma and 60 percent of the prison population is considered functionally illiterate (NCES, 2017). No national studies have

been done to show the prevalence of dyslexia among prisoners, but the little research that does exist at a state level suggests the rates are quite high. A study of Texas prisoners found that 48% of those randomly selected from a population of more than 130,000 inmates were likely to have dyslexia due to low performances on single word decoding and about two-thirds struggled with reading (Moody et al., 2000). Deficient performance was defined primarily as single word decoding performance that measured below the 25% percentile on the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test. Those with dyslexia are more vulnerable in experiencing additional issues such as ADHD, depression, and anxiety. There is evidence that significant numbers of adolescents with dyslexia are represented in populations of runaway homeless street youths (Barwick & Siegal, 1996), and adolescent suicide victims (Snowling, Bishop, & Stothard, 2000). Reading failure begins early, takes root quickly, and affects students for life (Moats, 2002).

Acquiring literacy skills represents, arguably, one of the most important goals in education. Alexander (2006) declared that the ability to "survive and thrive" is linked to an individual's competency in literacy (p. 414). Skilled reading is vital for all aspects of academics and it is critical for a child's future social and economic success in life (Snow, Burns, and Griffin, 1998). An inability to read and write proficiently affects job and career opportunities, socio-economic status, and limits one's engagement in society where literacy skills are required to participate. Although there are estimations in journals and countless studies that claim high numbers of individuals who have dyslexia, it is impossible to have an exact number of those affected by this learning difference. Dyslexia exists on a continuum affecting individuals to varying degrees and those with strong cognitive abilities are often able to develop strategies to compensate for poor reading. There is a large body of research that pertains to the medical aspects of dyslexia, but few studies focus on the holistic perspective of dyslexia.

Research Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of children identified as having dyslexia. This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What meanings do children with dyslexia construct for their learning difference?
2. How do they see themselves as literate people?
3. What is it like to experience school as a student with dyslexia?

Theoretical Framework

There are four interpretative lenses that frame this study. The first lens is a sociocultural theory of literacy, the second lens is a sociocultural learning theory, the third lens comes from communities of practice, and the fourth lens is literate identity theory.

Sociocultural Learning Theory

Sociocultural theory is concerned with how individual, social, and contextual issues impact human activity. A sociocultural view of learning focuses on the activities that learners engage in to learn, and the ways in which learning is an act of acquiring the characteristics and norms of a culture (Street, 1997). Culture influences the knowledge and experiences people bring to the classroom, the different ways communication is valued, and what ideas constitute as learning. Culturally constructed tools such as language, signs, and symbols mediate social and cultural engagement to create uniquely human forms of higher-level thinking (Gee, 2003; Wang, Bruce, & Hughes, 2011). Many of these cultural artifacts serve a dual purpose. Not only do they make possible the integration of a growing child into the culture, but they also transform the way the child's mind is being formed (Wang, et al., 2011). The acquisition of these cultural tools develops individuals to be masters of their own behavior, creating independence in their use of these tools.

Vygotsky (1978) emphasized human mental abilities emerge twice: "first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first between people and then inside the learner" (p. 57).

Vygotsky described children's knowledge acquisition as *internalization*, reflecting that knowledge is culturally based, and that children's knowledge and skills are acquired through their experiences with social partners. Internalization refers to the process of learning. A difference exists between what children can do on their own and what children can do with support. Vygotsky theorized and termed this difference as the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD). Vygotsky theorized learning can lead to development, and development can lead to learning, and this process takes place through a dynamic interrelationship between the two within the ZPD. Since much of what children learn comes from the culture around them and much of children's problem solving is mediated through an adult's help, children require support from those in their community that have learned what is valued in the culture. With appropriate adult help, children can often perform tasks they are incapable of completing on their own. By providing assistance to learners within their ZPD their growth is being supported. Through identification of a learner's ZPD, teachers find out what knowledge, skills, and understandings have not yet surfaced for the learner and give support through a process of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). In the context of classroom interaction, the term scaffolding refers to the support given by an expert to novices during the learning process, which is tailored to their needs with the intention of helping learners to achieve their learning goals. For children who struggle to master the literacy practices required to become readers and writers, interventions within learning communities can provide the process of scaffolding instruction to foster students' learning. Learning from a social and cultural perspective involves people in a community of practice that affords them the ability to engage, participate, and interact within a variety of contexts.

Sociocultural Theory of Literacy

Literacy encompasses a set of social practices that are situated and used in particular

ways for particular purposes in different social settings (Street, 1993, 1995; Barton & Hamilton, 1999). It is through interacting with others in their communities that one becomes socialized into the strategies and practices of literacy in that context (Gee, 1999). The theory of literacy as a social practice has been largely influenced by Street's (2001) ideological model, which conceptualizes literacy as a set of practices that are grounded in specific contexts and "inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society" (p. 433). According to Street (2003), there are two distinct models of literacy with very different conceptual understandings: the autonomous model and the ideological model. The autonomous model of literacy ignores or places little emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of students' lives, but rather imposes western conceptions of literacy from one class or cultural group onto another. The autonomous model is rooted in a particular worldview of literacy and a desire for that view to dominate culture (Street, 1984). This model views literacy as a set of autonomous skills that can be learned independently from social context. This view fails to take into account the diverse uses, meanings, and significance of different forms of reading and writing, which take place within diverse social and cultural practices. The ideological model of literacy offers a more culturally sensitive view of literacy practices as they vary from one context or culture to another. The ideological model of literacy posits that literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral set of skills to learn, but rather embedded in socially constructed principles (Street, 2003). Literacy as a social practice addresses reading and writing as "rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, and being" (Street, 2003, p. 78). Street (1995) suggested that engaging with literacy is a social act, whereby teachers and their students interact as a social practice that affects the nature of the literacy being learned. In many schools it is the autonomous model of literacy that often serves as the framework for developing students' reading identities (Street, 2005). When teachers apply an autonomous model of literacy to their instruction, literacy

proficiency is centered on literacy skills that must be mastered to be a competent reader and writer, whereas when they apply an ideological model, literacy proficiency is centered on practices that are socially constructed.

The theoretical work of Barton and Hamilton has been influential in developing theories of literacy as a social practice. According to Barton and Hamilton (2000), literacy practices are "more usefully understood as existing in the relationships between people, within groups and communities, rather than as a set of properties residing in the individuals" (p. 8). Literacy practices are patterned by social institutions and power relationships where some literacies become more dominant, visible, and influential than others. Society's goal for its citizens is to attend the social institution of school to become proficient in a set of literacy practices that are regarded as integral to become active and participating members of that society.

To meet society's expectations in becoming literate, one must learn a set of social practices to develop proficiency as a reader and writer. To become a proficient reader and writer one must develop and be able to sustain a repertoire of literacy practices, which are culturally determined. Luke and Freebody (1997, 1999) developed the Four Resources Model that conceptualizes the practices proficient readers of text use, the resources that are utilized, and the roles readers adopt during the act of reading. The Four Resources Model expanded the definition of reading from a more simplistic model of decoding printed texts (Gough, 1972) to a model of constructing meaning and analyzing texts within sociocultural contexts (Gee, 1996). The goal of this model was to shift the focus from trying to find a right method for teaching learners how to read to determining if the resources and strategies that were being used in reading programs were integrating the broad repertoire of practices required in today's economies and cultures (Luke & Freebody, 1999). The Four Resources Model is a theoretical framework to broaden educator's understanding of literacy and reading (Freebody, 1992), which recognizes the dominance of

cognitive perspectives on literacy education and instructional practices (Luke, 1995). The Model provided literacy educators and researchers with an expanded perspective on what it means to be a successful reader in new times (Freebody & Luke, 1990).

In later reiterations of the Four Resources Model, Luke and Freebody (1997, 1999) revised their original concept of the roles readers adopt to a set of resources or social practices that readers draw upon to make sense of their worlds (Serafini, 2012). The shift from resources and roles to social practices foregrounded how literacy is intertwined within political and cultural contexts, social power, and capital (Street, 1984). From a sociocultural perspective, proficient readers would be described in terms of the job demands and expectations that a particular culture places on its members, and to what degree and in what ways a culture views and uses text. A 21st century definition of text expands beyond the borders of the printed word, where text can be written, screen based, digital, or multimodal. However, text that is written remains the most dominant to learn in classrooms today, due to the scope and usage of written text in a globally connected world. The original Four Resources Model was primarily focused on the concept of text as printed text and written language, although Freebody and Luke (2003) acknowledged the multimodal nature of texts when they later stated, "To be literate is to be an everyday participant in literate societies, themselves composed of a vast range of sites, locations, and events that entail print, visual digital, and analogue media" (p. 53). The Model acknowledges that reading and writing practices are not exclusive, but need to be authentically and purposely conceptualized. Therefore, the concept of the Four Resources Model of reading is expanded to include written text and multimodal texts.

The Four Resources Model theorizes there are four sets of social practices that readers utilize as proficient readers. They are code breaker, text participant, text user, and text analyst. Code breaker is the practice of deciphering and breaking the code of written and visual language

to convey meaning. Breaking the code of written texts requires an understanding of the structure of language, such as the alphabet, sounds in words, spelling, and the patterns that exist when constructing words. Multimodal texts present information across a variety of modes, which include visual images, design elements, written language, and other semiotic resources to construct meaning (Siegel, 2006). Multimodal texts require an expansion of our view of the interpretive practices that readers draw upon to make sense of texts that are non-linear structures, because there is no determined path that readers of multimodal text follow (Kress, 2003). Text participation is the practice of making literal and inferential meanings from texts. Luke and Freebody (1999) extended their definition of reader as text participant to include participation in understanding and composing written, visual, and multimodal texts. Readers as interpreters involve a process of constructing meaning to various texts and images. The primary goal of reading print or multimodal text is to create meaning around what has been written by the author or depicted by the artist (Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). The third practice is text user, which involves reading texts for social purposes. One uses text for functional purposes within cultural and social contexts. One must understand the functions that different texts perform and that these functions shape the way texts are structured, their tone, their degree of formality, and their sequence of components (Luke & Freebody, 1999). The fourth practice is to critically analyze and transform texts. Understanding that texts are constructed with underlying values, beliefs, and views from the author and reader's position, texts are never ideologically neutral. All text represents particular points of views, which can silence some and have the ability to influence others. From a sociocultural perspective literacy is a social practice that involves the construction of meaning in socially mediated contexts and takes into account that power relationships are inherent in any setting, alongside a reader's identity, and the available means of social participation (Serafini, 2012).

The Four Resources Model is a framework that "avoids a model of literacy as the artifact of pedagogical styles or preferences; rather it draws attention to the kinds of practices students need to learn" (Comber, 1997, p. 32). The literacy practices students need to learn and how they learn them occur most often in social institutions, such as schools, which are influenced by the practices that are most valued in society and culture. Therefore, understanding how and what children learn in school is an extension of society's expectations of what counts as literacy proficiency. Children enter the community of school and its practices with opportunities to learn, but for children that struggle to learn *literacy* and do *literacy,* instruction requires support and understanding in the ways all children learn, so all children can participate and engage in the literacy activities that are most valued within their school communities.

Communities of Practice

Understanding learning in social terms is a perspective that takes into account the importance of how learning takes place and the effects that occur on those that look to become members of a community of practice. The social context created within classrooms determines ways in which communication, teacher and student roles, and opportunities for learning are constructed. What people learn in school is largely dependent upon and influenced by what is valued in those communities of practice (Hammond, Austin, Orcutt, & Rosso, 2001). Social learning and an individual's capability to learn the practices of a particular community are central to communities of practice. Learning takes place when learners are able to engage in and contribute as members to the practices of the communities in which they participate (Wenger, 1999). Participation is not only engagement in activities with certain people, but also being active participants in the practices of social communities where identities are constructed (Wenger, 1999). One of the goals of teachers is to support students in their engagement of activities, talk, and use of tools in a manner that is consistent with the practice of the community.

Wenger-Trayner, Fenton-O'Creevy, Hutchinson, Kubiak, and Wenger-Trayner (2015) proposed the metaphor *landscapes of practice* as a model for how learning can be thought of as a journey through a living landscape of practice. Landscapes of practice embody multiple communities of practice, where identity is formed across many different practices. A social landscape shapes one's experiences and identities. According to Wenger-Trayner et al. (2015), within each individual's learning journey, engagement and participation in a community of practice are experiences that affect one's beliefs about their competence or incompetence and identity. According to Wenger-Trayner et al. (2015), an individual's competence occurs between their individual experiences and how a community defines competence within its community of practice. For a social institution like school, learning a set of practices is required to become competent. However, competence is not static and can shift. What constitutes competence within a community of practice may or may not result in membership. For newcomers or others looking to gain membership, their competence must be transformed until their experience reflects the competence of the community. A newcomer or those seeking membership may be marginalized or dismissed from a community due to their low level of competence, which is a reflection of those that have the power to define competence within that community (Wenger-Trayner, et al., 2015). Learning occurs at the boundary between a person and social structure. Learning does not occur only within social structure, or only within an individual, but in the relationship that exists between the two (Wenger-Trayner et al., 2015).

Literate Identity

How one reads and writes can have an impact on the type of person one is recognized as being, and on how one sees oneself (Baker & Freebody, 1989; Street, 1994). Children develop a sense of being literate, which becomes their personal theory of what literacy is, how one becomes literate, how competency is demonstrated, and what counts as literacy in a particular

social setting (Heath, 1991; Young & Beach, 1997). According to Young (1996), one's sense of being literate can act as a psychological tool that can impact behavior and how one engages in literacy activities. A child's sense of being literate is often tied to how they see themselves as a literate member of their various communities of practice (Young, 1996).

Embedded within one's sense of being literate is literate identity. How an individual develops and shapes their literate identity will evolve from various social experiences, contexts, and can change over time and with context (Beach & Ward, 2013; Collins & Beach 2012; Moje & Luke, 2009). Literate identities develop and are manifested in different ways, as individuals become members in different social groups (Collins & Beach, 2012; Gee, 2004). Wenger (1999) posited that each person develops their own unique identities through the various interactions that occur within the communities of practice to which they belong. Thus, all communities in which individuals engage and participate affect identity. Street (2005) asserted, "The ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, being" (p. 418). The sociocultural practices instilled within a community of practice where learning occurs, such as school, impacts the formation of one's literate identity. Therefore, the literate identities of children are shaped by the practices in which they engage.

There are many factors children draw from to understand and develop their literate identities. Beach and Ward (2013) have identified four aspects of literate identity, which include the progress they are able to make, how they compare themselves to others in the community, how they perceive others see their abilities as a literate person, and how they feel about doing the literacy practices. Through their interactions with teachers, peers, and family members, children learn what it means to be identified as a certain type of reader and writer and the positive and negative aspects associated with each (McDermott, Goldman, & Vareene, 2006). Individuals' identities are formed, reinforced, or reformed based on their experiences and how they situate

themselves within the experiences of their learning environments (Alsup, 2005). Martens and Adamson (2001) found classroom teachers affected children's literate identity more often than the experiences the children had from home and other communities. Beach and Ward (2013) found schooled literacy practices in the classroom became the benchmark for defining what counted as literacy and how one measured their competence in and out of school. How a person views themselves as a literate individual and how they view their own sense of competency has an impact on how they perceive themselves as a literate individual (Beach, Ward, & Mirseitova, 2007). Thus, communities of learning where literacy practices occur impact and shape how a person perceives themselves as a literate person.

Definition of Terms

Dyslexia: A learning difference characterized by poor phonological awareness abilities, exhibited by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word reading skills, decoding, and spelling.

Dyslexia Intervention: Instruction that includes the direct systematic and explicit teaching of skills to decode and encode printed text that is interactive and multisensory.

Literacy: A set of social practices that are situated for a particular time and space and used to construct and share meaning with other members in communities of practice.

Literate Identity: How an individual views himself as a literate individual within a particular context or discourse community.

Literacy Proficiency: The ability to participate in a culture or community where one has developed a set of social practices to meet the demands and expectations of how a particular culture views and uses text.

Phonological Awareness: An awareness that spoken words consist of individual speech sounds (phonemes) and combinations of speech sounds (syllables, onset-rime units).

Phonological Processing: The use of sounds (phonemes) to process spoken and written

language.

Text: is written, screen based, digital, multimodal or remixed to construct and communicate meaning.

In the following chapters I will discuss and present the information that has been gathered as a result of this study. In chapter 2, I will review the literature regarding what we know about interventions for children with dyslexia, how children with dyslexia think about and make sense of their learning, and the development of literate identity. In chapter 3, I will present the methodology and design for my study. Chapter 4 will detail my findings related to how children with dyslexia understand their learning difference, how dyslexia affects their literate identity, and how they experience school. In Chapter 5, I will discuss my findings in relation to the literature as well as discuss the implications of my study and provide suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This study sought to gain a deeper understanding of how children with dyslexia experience school, how they feel about themselves as readers and writers, and how they make meaning of their learning difference. The review of literature provides a foundation for the study by examining the effects of teacher support and peer interactions. This is followed by a review of the studies on how learning environments affect identity, and more specifically, how one's literate identity is shaped by social practices. The review will then examine and discuss a limited number of studies about how children understand a learning difference and conclude with studies that review early intervention.

Experiencing School

Classrooms are complex social systems and student relationships and interactions are also complex systems (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012). Schools provide the context for a child's first relationship with the world outside their families, enabling the development of social relationships and interactions. Children's perceptions of the school experience directly affect their school lives, where teachers are the most important element in the learning experience (Erkan, Tarman, Sanli, Kosan, & Omruuzun, 2018). One of the main themes throughout the literature on how children experience school was the impact and influence of the teacher. Interactions can be thought of as a two-way means of communication that exists verbally and non-verbally. The research investigating the interactions between the teacher and student had several layers that constituted means of support. A review of the literature on teacher support represents two areas significantly impacted by teacher support—academic success and student engagement. Additionally, important in understanding how children experience school are the interactions and influences of peers. A review of the studies of peer interactions reflects both positive and negative outcomes for student's wellbeing. Therefore, understanding what facets of

these relationships and interactions impact children broadens our understanding of how school is experienced.

Teacher Support

Teacher relationships are dyadic systems with elements that include psychological, behavioral, and cultural processes (Hamre, Hatfield, Pianta, & Jamil. 2014). Relationships and interactions between teachers and students reflect a classroom's capacity to promote development, thus understanding the nature and quality of these relationships is important to our understanding of how these interactions affect learning and personal growth (Osterman, 2000). The research investigating the interactions between the teacher and student had several layers that constituted means of support. Each type of teacher support reflected a unique set of behaviors that could influence students' attitudes and actions and how they experience school in unique ways. Teacher support was referred to in the literature as relatedness, closeness, connectedness, sense of belonging, and caring (Birch & Ladd, 1996; Connor, 2010; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; Jerome, Hamre, & Pianta, 2009). Although teacher support has been described using various terminology, the key components of a supportive teacher were reflected in the extent to which students felt personally accepted, respected, included, and supported in a school's social environment (Goodenow & Grady, 1993). The review of the literature indicated two key themes significantly impacted by teacher support, which were academic success and student engagement in learning.

Academic Success

A body of research has identified associations between teacher-student relationships and academic success from prekindergarten to higher education (Birch & Ladd 1997; Federici & Skaalik, 2014; Furrer & Skinner, 2003; McCormick, O'Connor, Capella & McClowry, 2013; Tennant et al., 2015). Studies have shown children that have positive relationships with teachers

that demonstrate high levels of closeness are more likely to exhibit concurrent and prospective academic achievement (Baker, 2006; Hamre & Pianta, 2001, 2007). McCormick, et al. (2013) found that having a positive teacher-student relationship in kindergarten could promote academic achievement in first grade. Data was collected on 324 low-income Black and Hispanic students and 112 kindergarten and first-grade teachers. The results showed that having high quality teachers, which they defined as teachers that had high levels of closeness with low levels of conflict with their students, had a positive impact on math achievement in first grade. In a longitudinal field study conducted by O'Connor and McCartney (2007) researchers examined teacher-student relationships between preschool through third grade and, specifically, children's third-grade association between teacher-student interactions and achievement. The study sample of 1,364 children participated from birth through sixth grade and found a consistent predictor of both reading and math skill growth was associated with the warmth, closeness, and response to individual needs that the teacher provided through student interactions.

Studies explored the association between academic achievement and teacher support by using year-end grade point averages or year-end grades as measurements of achievement. Kosir and Tement (2014) explored this association with a sample of 816 elementary and secondary Slovenian students from three different grade levels consisting of late childhood to middle adolescence. The results indicated the relation between some aspects of the teacher-student relationship, such as student perceived teacher support and academic achievement, created a form of reciprocal dynamics, which affected students' good or poor school experiences (Kosir & Tement, 2014). Results from the study provided empirical support for the reciprocal nature of this relation: however, the study does not show there could be additional factors that mediated the outcome, such as student intelligence, behavior, or student engagement, which could influence the relationship between teacher and student. Tennant et al. (2014) found that teacher

emotional support was significantly and positively related to grade point average for both adolescent boys and girls. A sample of 796 seventh and eighth grade middle school students used the Child and Adolescent Social Support Scale to measure different levels of teacher support, which revealed that girls rated emotional and appraisal support as more important than boys. The study did not indicate in what ways the teacher support was able to affect such a broad assessment as grade point. Additionally, the study did not give the students instruction regarding which teachers to think of when answering questions about teacher support, so it is unclear if students were thinking of teachers they had had in the past from elementary school or those that were most salient.

A study to explore the association between teacher support and school effort to enhance academic achievement was conducted by Federici and Skaalvik (2014). The participants were 309 students in 9^{th} and 10^{th} grade from Norway. A seven-item scale was developed specifically for this study to measure students' perceived support from their math teacher. Achievement was measured by year-end grades. The results indicated student's perceptions of teacher support had an effect on achievement. They found when teachers gave support by adapting their teaching to student's learning, they were increasing achievement outcomes and fostering an intrinsic value of learning (Federici & Skaalvik, 2014). The results showed it was the highest-achieving students that perceived teachers as being the most supportive. The study did not measure or differentiate outcomes for struggling or low-achieving students. For students who struggle to learn, emotional support alone may not improve their skills.

Studies also showed there were links between the social support provided by teachers and feelings of belonging. Zumbrunn, McKim, Bubs, and Hawley (2014) investigated the perceptions of undergraduate students at a large university exploring classroom characteristics that were associated with support, belonging, and achievement. The study was a mixed methods

design that incorporated self-report questionnaires, such as the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale, Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, and selected scales from the Student Evaluation of Teaching questionnaire. Additionally, interviews were given that focused on students' perceptions of belonging and their experiences with their instructor and peers in the course. The results indicated there was a strong correlation between belonging, achievement, and engagement (Zumbrunn et al., 2014). The findings from this study were consistent with results from past studies conducted with younger populations (McCormick et al., 2013), which show students' perceptions of support from teachers positively associated with achievement. However, specific pedagogical practices were not examined in this study to include a variety of students learning abilities.

McCormick and O'Connor (2015) sought to examine developmental trajectories of teacher-student relationships across the elementary years to further explore the association between teacher-student relationships and achievement. Study participants were selected using conditional sampling from 10 American cities, including families from diverse ethnic groups, economic backgrounds, and geographic areas. Results showed that closeness in teacher-student relationships began to decline across elementary school, however, the associations between a close teacher-student relationship and reading achievement remained constant across time. Jerome, et al. (2009) followed 878 children from kindergarten through sixth grade. Teachers reported on their closeness and conflict each year for the purpose of describing how teacher relationships change over time. Results from the study found from kindergarten to sixth grade, feelings of a close relationship with teachers decreased as students got older and progressed through grades (Jerome et al., 2009).

Allen, et al. (2013) found teachers that give emotional support, classroom organization, and instructional support were predictive of student achievement. A sample of 643 students enrolled

in 37 secondary school classrooms were observed to predict future student achievement from teacher-student interactions in the classroom. Research assistants observed classrooms and coded their observations using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System and used the Standards of Learning year-end test scores to measure achievement. The Standards of Learning assessment is a state-mandated accountability measure for the Commonwealth of Virginia to meet the requirements of No Child Left Behind. Student achievement was linked to teacher-student interactions when the teacher focused on engaging the adolescent students emotionally and intellectually. These findings were consistent with prior findings that linked teacher student interactions and positive academic learning outcomes; however, the study did not identify specific teacher processes that lead to student achievement. In addition, results of the classroom interactions were obtained based on classroom observations of 40 minutes in a single classroom session early in the year, which does not provide for many of the teacher-student interactions that take place throughout a school year that affect end-of-school academic results.

All the studies defined teacher support as an emotional element that encompassed positive feelings of closeness, warmth, and a sense of belonging, which could enhance student achievement. Based on the studies that have been conducted on the association between the support of the teacher and student achievement, it is unclear if the participants from the studies represent students that have a variety of learning abilities. It is not clear if the samples of participants included students that struggle and, specifically, if students with learning differences were represented, nor their perceptions of what support and interactions led to a better school experience.

The greater majority of these studies were correlational studies that used self-report measures such as surveys. While surveys offer opportunities to gather data on student perspectives, they did not allow students to describe in detail why they had those perspectives.

Engagement

Teachers' positive support led to positive experiences of school, which had a direct connection to higher levels of engagement. Engagement played a mediational role, linking learning and academic success in elementary, secondary, and higher education (Rimm-Kaufman, Larsen, Curby, and Abry, 2015). Developing interactive relevant lessons and activities while being encouraging and supportive to students were some of the ways in which teachers enhanced student engagement in the classroom (Garcia-Reid, Reid, & Peterson, 2005). An important factor that contributed to student engagement was positive teacher-student interaction in the classroom (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012; Wang & Eccles, 2013). Conversely, student disengagement was often a result of lacking a positive school relationship with a caring adult (Steinberg, Brown, & Dornbusch, 1996). A widely used definition for student engagement, according to Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris (2004), consisted of three distinct, yet interrelated components of student's commitment and involvement with learning and school, to include behavioral, emotional, and cognitive engagement. Behavioral engagement referred to students' positive actions and conduct towards school and learning (Fredricks , Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). Cognitive engagement referred to students' self-regulated and strategic approach to learning (Archambault, Janosz, Fallu, and Pagani, 2009). The third component of emotional engagement focused on students' feelings of happiness, interest, anxiety, and sense of belonging with peers, teachers, and the school. Emotional support linked to classroom practices fostered and facilitated students' social and emotional functioning (Hamre et al., 2013).

A large body of research has been conducted using self-report questionnaires to assess student engagement. Furrer and Skinner (2003) investigated the role of the classroom teacher and the effect the teacher-student relationship had on academic engagement and motivation. Participants were 641 students in third through sixth grades. Results of survey data showed that

students' engagement was contingent upon relatedness with teachers. Students who felt appreciated by their classroom teachers were more apt to report a sense of comfort in the class and were more engaged in learning activities. In contrast, students who did not feel connected to the classroom teacher reported feelings of disengagement from the academic activities and dissatisfaction with school. The findings indicated that students' perceptions of their relationship with the classroom teacher played an important role in affecting the student's school experience and level of engagement. The students were reported as already generally doing well in both constructive engagement and school achievement. What is missing in the study is how the teacher-student relationship related to academic engagement and achievement from the perspective of children that may struggle in school. Umback (2005) sought to explore what college faculty behaviors, attitudes, and practices related to students' engagement and outcomes. Students completed the National Student Survey of Engagement and faculty completed a survey designed to explore how faculty members structured their classrooms and their expectations of student engagement in educational practices. Using hierarchical linear modeling they found that engagement was positively related to classroom interactions between students and faculty, especially where faculty used collaborative learning techniques in their classrooms. What is missing in these correlational studies that used survey measures are conversations with the participants to explore what specific interactions and teaching practices increased or hindered engagement for those students that are not average mainstream learners.

A common measure used to assess teacher-student interactions is the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS). Rimm-Kaufman, et al. (2015) conducted a study with 387 fifth grade students to explore student engagement in 63 math classrooms as well as the quality of teacher-student interactions. Teacher-student interactions were observed using the CLASS. Student engagement was measured using two self-report questionnaires to assess

cognitive and emotional engagement. Teachers completed self-report questionnaires to assess engagement. The researchers concluded that students who had teachers who responded in a warm and caring manner worked hard on classroom assignments and reported enjoyment in learning math. Virtanen, Lerkkanen, Poikkeus, and Kuorelahi (2015) demonstrated that classrooms observed as high in emotional, instructional, and organizational quality were found to have students who were behaviorally engaged. The participants were 181 secondary school students and eight teachers from four mainstream schools in Finland. Each teacher assessed the level of behavioral engagement in the classroom and students self-rated their behavioral engagement in learning. Classroom observations were conducted during the fall on two different days within a week apart. Teachers were observed using the CLASS, and both teachers and students provided self-ratings using a task orientation questionnaire. The students rated themselves as highly engaged when high levels of emotional support were associated with high levels of instructional support. From the perspectives of the teachers, engagement was associated with organizational support as the most effective way to engage students in academic learning and enhance social and moral growth. This study reveals that behavioral engagement is a contextual phenomenon. According to results from this study, teacher views of engagement were associated with time-on-task and learning occurred when management disruptions were rare (Virtanen et al., 2013). The researchers suggested that structure, such as classroom processes and procedures, affected competence and formed a motivational basis for active engagement; therefore, behavioral engagement was an outcome of classroom processes. There appeared to be a conflict between the student's perspective and teacher's perspective of what constituted engagement, which may be the issue that continues to affect children that struggle to learn in some classroom environments. Students reported high levels of engagement when they received high levels of instructional support, which conflicted with how the teachers reported their

perspective of student engagement. How learners who struggled defined teacher support leading to engagement is still not known.

Unfortunately, not all students are positively engaged in lessons. Students' negative feelings or emotions toward a content area or activity may result in diminished effort. Van den Berghe, Tallir, Cardon, Aelterman, and Haerens (2015) investigated whether teacher support related to student engagement and disengagement in first through third grades. The participants were 39 physical education teachers. The study was a quantitative correlational design. Engagement and disengagement were assessed for both students and teachers using the Engagement versus Disaffection with Learning Scale. Need support behaviors were measured using a teacher and student version of the Teacher as Social Context Questionnaire. A short version of the General Causality Orientation Scale was used to measure teachers' degree of autonomous and controlled motivational orientation. The results indicated that teachers were able to adapt their behaviors according to the classes they were teaching, and engagement was positively related to support that was given. However, not all students equally perceived the teacher interactions as supportive, which the researchers concluded was likely due to the various personal characteristics of each student. The results also suggested there was a strong negative association between disengagement and support not given. This study supported previous research, which stated teacher-student interactions were unique to the individuals (Pianta, Hamre, & Allen, 2012), and a student's perception of support can affect the levels of engagement and disengagement. This study did not provide insight into what students that represent different abilities and personalities need as support.

Longitudinal studies have explored the associations that impacted student engagement. Archambault, Pagaini, and Fitzpatrick (2013) in a longitudinal study examined associations between teacher-student interactions and engagement. The researchers found students were more

engaged if their teachers were caring and had warm relationships with their students in first and fourth grade. Findings also showed that although some children experienced early difficulties to actively participate and respond to teacher expectations, their past situations did not seem to affect the potential to develop positive affiliations with teachers in later years, underscoring our understanding that each teacher-child relationship is unique. The researchers concluded when students developed a close connection with their teacher, they were more inclined to subsequently respond positively to curricular expectations (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). Further investigation of students with learning differences and how they see facets of participation to enhance or hinder engagement is missing.

Guo, Sun, Breit-Smith, Morrison, and Connor (2015) studied the relation between behavioral engagement and reading achievement among low, mid, and high socioeconomic students in first, third, and fifth grades. This longitudinal study of 1,160 participants examined the directional relations between children's behavioral engagement and reading achievement and whether the relations differed between low-socioeconomic status (SES) and mid- or high-SES students. The Classroom Observation System for first, third, and fifth grade was used as a measure of behavioral engagement. Reading skills were measured using the Woodcock-Johnson Test of Achievement-R. Results from the study indicated that relations between behavioral engagement and reading achievement remained stable over time regardless of SES (Guo et al., 2015). Reading achievement predicted later behavioral engagement, specifically, preschool reading predicted first grade behavioral engagement and third-grade reading was a significant predictor of fifth-grade behavioral engagement. One reason for this may be because students leaving preschool felt confident in their reading abilities going into first grade, and conversely, students who were strong in third grade, were able to regain their abilities in fifth after experiencing challenges in fourth grade where reading is more focused on "reading to learn",

rather than learning to read. Findings also showed that behavioral engagement did not predict reading achievement. The researchers found that children that had difficulties with early reading had lower behavioral engagement, which they suggested was most likely due to frustration and disruptive behaviors due to their resistance to engage in reading (Guo et al., 2015). The results from this study indicated that because children's behavioral engagement and reading achievement tended to be stable over time regardless of SES, it is crucial to implement interventions targeting both reading skills and behavioral engagement early in schooling (Guo et al., 2015). However, how early intervention supports or changes in engagement of children who struggle is not known.

In addition to behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement has been studied in virtual secondary math classrooms. Kim, Park, Cozart, and Lee (2015) explored the differences in 100 virtual high school students' cognitive engagement in math achievement over a semester. The researchers defined engagement as cognitive and affective participation in learning activities. They also asserted that what transformed motivation to engagement was the effort and metacognitive regulation that students put into the process of learning. Student's engagement, motivation, and regulation were measured using the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire, and engagement was measured using the Achievement Emotion Questionnaire in Mathematics. A repeated measure design was used to collect data three different times during the semester. Findings showed that several engagement and motivational variables were associated with achievement. The results indicated the higher the level of effort the students had, the higher their level of achievement was. Given these findings Kim et al. (2015) suggested teachers should support students' effort regulation as a means to help them stay engaged and motivated in online learning environments. This study did not address the perspectives from students who may give the greatest amount of effort, but have the lowest levels of achievement due to learning

differences.

There is a developmental shift that occurs when children enter middle school and how students perceive teachers. Adolescence is a critical time period in which students experience the opportunity to self-construct their identity as academically capable, socially integrated, and committed to learning (Skinner & Pitzer, 2012). It is also a period of time when adolescents are more prone to experience a decline in motivation, achievement, and engagement (Schulenberg, 2006). The nature of children's relationships with teachers during this time period is relatively understudied. Studies that have examined the role of different types of teacher support to promote adolescent student engagement and success in school settings is scarce.

The review of studies highlights the importance of student and teacher interactions and social learning environments. While research has shown there are associations between teacher interactions and student engagement, existing research has not captured what dimensions of engagement link to students that struggle or have a learning difference. Studies have shown that social relationships play a key role in how engaged or disengaged students are in their learning, yet there remains a gap in the literature to better understand how adolescents that struggle with a learning difference experience engagement within the learning environments of school.

Peers

Relationships among peers provide an interpersonal context that affect children's learning and experiences of school. There are three main themes that emerged from the literature of the influence of peers and how school is experienced. The three main themes are: peer friendships, peer acceptance, and school belonging.

Peer Friendship. Friendship within the social environment of school is considered a developmental necessity, especially with adolescents, at a time of increased independence from parents, close friends meet the need for personal validation and support. Peer friendships within

school environments serve as both social and emotional supports providing feelings of security, school liking, acceptance, and companionship. Friendship is a voluntary relationship founded on cooperation and trust A friendship is considered mutual or reciprocated; when both children in the relationship confirm that the friendship exists (Rubin, Bukowski, & Parker, 2007). Studies exploring peer friendships were most prominent in the 1980's and 1990's; however, studies continue to build on those insights from over three decades ago. These studies draw linkages between children's school friendships and the benefits that affect their emotional development and adjustment to school. Berndt and Perry (1986) assessed 122 second-, fourth-, and eighth-grade children's perceptions of the social support that was provided by friends. The children completed brief questionnaires about their friendships, best-friend nominations, and individual interviews were asked a series of questions about their relationship with their close friend. Factor analysis revealed that the positive features of friendships were interpersonal communication, sharing, and support. The study reflected the value of perceived support as an important factor that contributed to peer relationships and to children's development. Parker and Asher (1993) examined 881 third through 5^{th}-grade children using sociometric measures of acceptance and friendship, and two questionnaires on the features of friendship. Results indicated that many low-accepted children had best friends and were happy with their friendships, which indicated that, despite perceived feelings of being accepted, friendship made a distinct contribution to their wellbeing as they adjusted to the social world of school. Bishop and Inderbitzen (1995) investigated how friendship and peer acceptance were related to self-esteem with 542 ninth-grade students. The participants completed four questionnaires: Results indicated that participants that had at least one reciprocal friend had higher self-esteem scores than subjects without a reciprocal friend. Findings also showed that friendship, more than peer acceptance was the best predictor of self-esteem.

Ladd, Kochenderfer, and Coleman (1996) conducted a study to assess young children's perceptions of classroom friendships to determine if those perceptions were associated with their transition to grade school. Subscales of five friendship processes were administered to 82 kindergarten children who discussed a reciprocated and stable "best" friend in the classroom. Results of the children's reports showed that features of the children's classroom friendships yielded feelings of validation and support, which fostered the quality of children's emotional life in school to be happier.

To better understand the developmental significance of children's friendships, children's perceptions of close peer relationships were investigated. Cleary, Ray, LoBello, and Zachar (2002) assessed 54 second-, third-, fifth- and sixth-grade children's perceptions of relationship quality with a reciprocal classroom friend and a reciprocal classroom best friend. The aim of the study was to better understand the differences that exist between the types and levels of children's positive peer relationships and investigate the accuracy of children's perceptions of their partner's perceptions. Relationship quality was assessed through five questionnaires. Results showed that reciprocal best friends were evaluated higher in the areas of caring, companionship, intimacy, and exclusivity. The researchers suggested that close friendships provided validation for a child's developing sense of worth because the relationship provided the child with the belief that he or she was valued.

Thien and Razak (2012) examined the direct and indirect influences of friendship on school life. The sample consisted of 2,400 Malaysian secondary students from 50 schools. A questionnaire with a 6-point Likert Scale was used to collect data measuring friendship quality and its association to school life. Findings showed friendship quality was significantly related to school life satisfaction, and acceptance was found to strongly relate to friendship quality. Spencer, Bowker, Rubin, Booth-LaForce, and Laursen (2013) extended research on the facets

that form and encompass close friendships with 166 fifth grade and sixth grade best friends to explore friendship quality. Of particular interest was the extent that children and their best friends endorsed similar attributes, emotional reactions, and coping strategies. Participants completed questionnaires to assess the qualities of their friendships and their emotional reactions and response selection of coping strategies. Results from the study suggested that children and their best friends thought similarly about social scenarios, especially when the scenarios involved each other. Although these studies shed light on the importance and benefits of friendships in school environments to provide emotional support, these studies do not address factors that may represent different associations linked with friendships for children with learning differences.

Peer Acceptance. Peer acceptance, distinct from peer friendship, refers to an individual child's acceptance within a larger peer group. Peer acceptance has been shown to be an important aspect in children's development as they transition from elementary school to middle school (Drolet & Arcand, 2013; Osterman, 2000; Thien and Razak, 2012). Kingery and Erdley (2007) examined peer acceptance and friendship with 146 fifth grade students to explore peer acceptance and friendship in predicting adjustment across the transition from elementary school to middle school. Measures were assessed for peer acceptance, peer nomination, and friendship quality. Results indicated that peer acceptance and friendship played a significant role in predicting how the transition to middle school was experienced. Peer emerged as a unique predictor in predicting school liking. Building on the previous study, Kingery, Erdley, and Marshall (2011) examined 365 students the spring of fifth grade into the fall of sixth grade. Participants completed measures that assessed peer acceptance and the quality of friendships. Results from the study showed that peer acceptance was correlated to children's peer relationships, and students that were accepted by their peers received emotional support that facilitated engagement in the classroom. Findings indicated that higher levels of peer acceptance

were related to high levels of school liking. The researchers suggested the strong links between peer acceptance and school adjustment positively impacted students' school attitudes.

Drolet and Arcand (2013) conducted a study to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships and supportive roles played by peers in school. Twelve, 12-13 year-old students were interviewed. The themes that emerged as meaningful to the participants were positive relationships with peers, the importance of feeling accepted, and having a sense of belonging. However, how friendship, peer acceptance, and self-esteem are related for those that have a learning difference is still not known. These studies illustrate the importance of peer acceptance as a positive emotional component to the emotional wellbeing of children, but what is missing are the effects of how children with a learning difference experience peer acceptance.

School Belonging. A sense of belonging can be conceptualized as a feeling that one belongs at school and are accepted by both teachers and peers. Osterman (2000) asserted a sense of belonging suggests a student's feeling of connectedness to school is through their relationships and interactions with peers, which provides feelings of security and school liking. Goodenow (1993) asserted that school success or failure was influenced not only by individual differences in skills and abilities, but also by a student's sense of belonging and membership in the school or classroom. Goodenow (1993) posited that although school membership may have little effect on young people who feel they are valued and supported in school, it is possible that there must be a modest level of membership that must be reached before students expend energy and risk failure by engaging in school.

To gain further insight on school belonging, Goodenow (1993) developed a short scale measuring school belonging, which was completed by 454 6^{th}-, 7^{th}-, and 8^{th}-grade students, along with a questionnaire measuring school membership. Results suggest that membership itself can be an important contributor to school motivation, effort, participation, and subsequent

achievement, which can be seen as reflections of a students' sense of school belonging (Goodenow, 1993).

Baumeister and Leary (1995) conducted an extensive review of the literature to determine whether there was empirical evidence to conclude that the need to belong is a fundamental human need. The review showed that children with reciprocated friendships were likely to have more positive feelings toward how school is experienced. Furrer and Skinner (2003) explored 641 children's sense of belonging from 3rd to 6th grade. Participants completed self-report questionnaires in the fall and again in the spring of each academic year. The findings from this study indicated that children's sense of belonging was linked to school success. According to the researchers, an influential factor that affected both school success and a sense of belonging was the children's' perceptions of connectedness associated with their peer relationships. Hamm & Faircloth (2005) conducted interviews with 24 tenth and eleventh grade students to investigate students' perspectives on the role friendships played in the development of school belonging. The students reported that they felt disconnected from their classes until friendships were formed (Hamm & Faircloth, 2005). Hamm & Faircloth (2005) suggested from these findings that friendships facilitated a sense of belonging by providing both emotional support and social acceptance. Vaquera and Kao (2008) analyzed how friendship reciprocity was linked to students' school wellbeing and belonging. Data were randomly selected from a nationally representative sample of 90,000 adolescents in grades 7-12. In-School Questionnaires were completed by over 90,000 adolescents from the sampled schools, which included measures of reciprocity of friendships, school belonging, grade point average, race, and gender. Results confirmed that having a reciprocated friendship has positive outcomes on adolescent wellbeing and feelings of school belonging.

Gowing (2019) conducted a mixed methods study to explore young people's understanding of

school connectedness and their experience of peer relationships at school. A sample size of 336 students aged 13 and 18 years participated in focus groups, a questionnaire, and diaries. Findings showed that, although the relationship with teachers was important, the lead relationship in how they felt connected to school were peers. Gowing (2019) concluded that peer relationships were the most valued aspect of the participant's school experience and should be viewed as a resource to foster relational opportunities. These studies show that the experience of belongingness is associated with children's feelings of relatedness and connectedness that can affect student engagement, emotional wellbeing, and how school is experienced. The research shows peer relationships, more specifically friendships foster peer acceptance and a sense of belonging as necessary and vital components of a child's social development, but how those important social contexts effect children with a learning difference is still not known.

Conclusion

The literature supports the importance and impact of teachers, peers, and classroom environments on student learning and developmental growth (Archambault et al., 2013; Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2015; Smart, 2014). While many of these studies are self-report, a majority of the studies use survey methods, which do not allow for an expanded methodology for children to express and elaborate on questions that are being asked of their experiences. The sample of participants in many of these correlational studies do not consider the differences in the children, for example, students that are doing well, from those that struggle, or identify those that may struggle or have a learning difference. Student experiences of school can be interpreted in different ways depending on the informant, thus making it important to conduct research into student populations and subgroups that do not represent the majority, or the perceived norm, to better understand how these children experience learning and personal growth in school environments. There is a lack of studies that investigates how adolescent children with learning

differences experience school environments.

Literate Identity

Over the past three decades literacy research has focused on literacy as a social practice, which has drawn attention to how literacy practices shape and reshape one's beliefs about themselves as literate people. How an individual perceives their literate abilities can have an impact on how one sees oneself in the world (Baker & Freebody, 1989), which can be powerful in the development of an individual's life (Moje & Luke, 2009). Understanding how literate identity is shaped requires insight into how social practices affect the human experience. Literate identity, in its most simplistic form, is how an individual views himself or herself as a literate individual within a particular context or discourse community (Young & Beach, 1997). There are relatively few empirical studies of literate identity as it is defined for this study.

A Sense of Being Literate

Each person develops their own personal view of themselves as literate individuals, and for children that attend school, their understandings of what it means to be literate begins with a sense of being literate (Heath, 1991). According to Young (1996), one's sense of being literate is inextricably connected to their literate identity by their experiences in a variety of social contexts. To investigate young children's sense of being literate and its relationship to their classroom literacy activities, Young (1996) explored how 12 first graders from three different classrooms came to view themselves as readers and writers. Three main themes were revealed from the data in how the children mediated their understandings regarding literacy: literacy was socially mediated, strategically facilitated, and required active participation (Young, 1996). Findings showed that the children viewed learning literacy as an active, social endeavor enacted by participation with others in their learning community. From the children's perspective, and as beginning readers, practice and repeated engagement was important in becoming a reader and

writer. Young (1996) found their sense of themselves as readers and writers, and their perceptions of their roles as members of the classroom community, embedded in the school practices of literacy. How the students viewed themselves as literate people and how they viewed literacy was linked to their beliefs about what counts as literate behavior at school (Young, 1996). Results of this study showed that the children's literate identity was being formed through the interactions with other members of their learning community and their perceptions of capability in relation to the other members of the classroom. An additional finding was as the children filled multiple roles playing and participating in the various literate communities of their classroom, they were learning how to establish themselves as literacy members of their classrooms. According to Young (1996), the situated nature of their literate identity construction was clearly connected to who the children perceived themselves to be as competent readers and writers and their personal beliefs about what it meant to be literate. This study is important as it served as a springboard to expand research on the different aspects of literate identity and how school literacy practices impact and influence the shaping of one's beliefs about themselves as literate people.

As an extension of this research, Young and Beach (1997) investigated the formation of first graders' sense of being literate and found the children viewed literacy as a social behavior and that there was a connection between literacy and its social purposes. This study demonstrated that the children's view of themselves as literate people were tied to the literacy contexts of their learning environments and to the other members of their elementary classrooms. This study gave insight into how children perceive their identity as reader sand writers and the contexts that affect how one's literate identity is shaped. As a result of these findings, Young and Beach (1997) theorized that literacies are more than a vehicle for sharing knowledge, but rather a facet of one's identity.

Perceiving Yourself as a Reader and Writer

McCarthey (2001) explored how fifth grade students' success or lack of success in literacy activities might impact the ways in which they and others saw them. Interviews were conducted with the teacher giving detailed explanations of her teaching practices and descriptions of 12 students. Interviews were also conducted with 7 of the 12 students' mothers. Findings from the study showed all the students had a sense of who they were as readers and writers and saw themselves in relation to classroom norms. The successful and avid literacy learners embraced those norms, while others resisted the norms either by avoiding tests or not coming to school for the reading day. The findings support the notion that classroom literacy practices can affect individuals' beliefs in who they are as readers and writers when their competences do not meet the normed expectation.

Alverman (2001) conducted a case study of a ninth-grade boy, Grady, who was reading a fifth-grade level. He was one of 30 students, in grades 7-9, that participated in an after-school media study. Grady was able to practice and improve his reading when he was given a Pokemon trainer's manual by the researcher, which was very challenging to read. However, he wanted to read the book to move to higher levels in his video game, so the book was of interest and purposeful for his needs. Grady participated and engaged in literacy as a social practice that had meaning for him outside of the practices that he struggled to master in school. Grady's competence and motivation to progress was now aligned to reading that served a purpose that he could relate to versus the school-related literacy tasks that had him positioned as a struggling reader. Although this study did not have the intent of exploring solely literate identity, this study is important because it reveals how individuals' beliefs about themselves as literate people often are the results of how they see or position themselves within a given context. Social practices within school environments signal what is valued or devalued, however, individuals can have

multiple literate identities that depend on the context they are in and the goals they are trying to achieve (Hall, 2010).

Beach, Ward, and Mirseitova (2007) conducted a study to discover how students interpreted and understood themselves as readers and thinkers in their classrooms. More specifically, they sought to solicit the children's views of teachers' practices that affect their sense of being literate. Participants were 17 students in elementary and middle school from the United States, Canada, and Kazakhstan. The study was grounded in participatory action research, with a goal to help teachers understand how students interpret their classroom practices. Interviews were conducted using a common set of questions for the purpose of getting the student perspectives of their learning and their experiences as readers. Results showed the students gave insights on the classroom practices that supported or did not support how they learned. Findings showed that through the students' participation in classroom practices, they were learning what it means to be literacy learners, by active engagement in questioning and communicating different ideas and perspectives. This study builds on previous research that one's literate identity is shaped through the social practices of one's community of practice. This study is important because students are learning that literacy is a means of communication that is not derived from what they have been told, but through active involvement in their classrooms where they construct, mediate, and explore their identities as literate people. What is not known from this study is the perspective of children that struggle or have a learning difference to know if the classroom practices supported or did not support their learning and ability to participate with active engagement.

Literate identities are neither static nor stagnant but are malleable and able to change across time as a child moves through school and participates in literacy events as members of their school literacy communities (Collins & Beach, 2012). Collins and Beach (2012) explored how sixty-six young adolescents in fourth and sixth grade viewed themselves as literate people and to

investigate if the students had diverse profiles of literate identity within the context of their classroom. A literate identity survey was the primary data source. The survey identified four factors in how readers and writers felt about themselves: how they felt about their own progress in reading or writing, how they felt they compared with their peers, what they perceived others thought about their reading or writing, and how they felt internally when they read and wrote.

The survey was analyzed first to determine the students' view of themselves and to identify differences by grade. Each grade level had a unique literate identity profile. Findings showed there were differing profiles of literate identity that represented how students felt if they were good readers and writers, if they were making progress, if they felt neutral, poor, and how they felt as readers and writers in relation to their peers. The researchers' findings support the notion that literate identities can be multiple and change across time as children move through grades and school classrooms, where they experience different interactions and expectations with teachers and society (Collins & Beach, 2012). This study is important because it adds to our understanding in how student's literate identity is shaped by the literacy activities and practices in which they participate. The study does not provide insight into the literate profiles for students with learning differences to better understand how literate identity is influenced by their perceptions of who they are as readers and writers as they move through grades and classrooms.

Beach and Ward (2013) explored the ways that four children constructed their literate identities in different contexts, the school context and the home context. Two children from Canada and two children from the United States discussed their in-school and out-of-school literacy practices. Data sources included observations of the children in different learning settings, a collection of artifacts, and interviews with the children, teachers, and parents. The results of the study suggest that students' literate identities were shaped primarily around what they felt were important literate behaviors to have in school environments. Insights from the

study showed that the identities of the children were connected with the purpose of the literacy event as well as within the practice itself. Beach and Ward (2013) assert that how an individual understands their literate identity evolves from various educational, cultural, and social experiences. This study illuminates the association between literate identity, literacy practices, and engagement for learning to occur. It is within social contexts that literate identity is constructed and how one perceives themselves as competent (Beach & Ward, 2013). This study supports similar perspectives of identity construction, (Moje & Lewis, 2007), in that how one feels about themselves is influenced by the interactions that take place in their learning communities, and those interactions imply particular norms and expectations. Learning, as a set of social practices, influence how children view what it means to be literate and how they see themselves as literate people. What is missing in this study is the perspective of how the identities of children that struggle with literacy were connected and engaged to the literacy events and practices, which may or may not have supported feelings of competence.

Delgado, Lisa (2014) examined the new literacy practices using technology with sixth grade adolescents in order to ascertain what affect these practices had upon their literate identity formation. The adolescents were able to demonstrate a variety of digital literacy practices of their choosing, not bound by the literacy practices of school. Results showed that adolescent perceptions of their competence and membership had a direct and positive impact on their literate identities. The participants felt positive about their proficiency using technology as a means of communicating meaning. Delgado suggested that their positive self-perceptions of communicating through new literacies indicated both intrinsic and extrinsic competence, which in turn, positively affected their literate identity. Findings also showed that the adolescents showed feelings of membership and belongingness that were manifested from discussions with the researcher. Delgado (2014) asserts that a facet of literate identity is dependent upon feelings

of membership within a community of practice, which were integral to the development of the participant's literate identities. This finding adds to Beach and Ward's study (2013), which found membership a significant construct in how adolescents viewed themselves as literate people. This study shows that literate identity is shaped by multiple literacies in various contexts and is connected to individual's feelings of competence. This study does not show how using new literacies to show meaning affected the literate identity, membership, and feelings of competence with adolescents that struggled with reading and writing in print.

Moses and Kelly (2017) examined how literacy practices and membership mediated the identity development within the classroom of two first-grade students with diverse linguistic backgrounds over one academic year. Findings showed that the literacy practices of interacting with peers and participating in discussion groups were integral practices in moving these struggling readers to progress in becoming more competent readers. Both participants developed positive literate identities by their participation in the literacy practices that promoted their ability to construct meaning as members of a classroom community. This study provides an understanding of how educational spaces can support literate identity among all children, however, the study does not explore how these practices affect literate identity development specifically for children with a learning difference.

Conclusion

Social institutions, such as school, where people share ideologies and value certain types of literacy practices can provide positive feelings and experiences in some, and negatively effect and marginalize others. Individuals move through school environments in which their beliefs about themselves as readers and writers are dynamic and are continually shaped and reshaped (Beach & Ward, 2013; Collings & Beach, 2012) due to the cultural norms that embed particular practices and influence how individuals perceive themselves as literate people. The studies show

that children experience literacy in school as being social, strategic, and active (Young, 1996), and perspectives of membership in learning communities are affected by their beliefs in who they are as literate people (Moses & Kelly, 2017; Young, 1996). While these studies show there has been some research into literacy identity, very little of it has looked at how individuals that have a learning difference see themselves as readers and writers.

Understanding a Learning Difference

Students that learn differently frequently do not understand why they learn differently and bear the stigma of being thought of as lazy and dumb. Research in the literature about how individuals understand their learning difference is sparse. I conducted a search for studies around individual's understandings of their learning difference using a variety of key words. Even as I changed the key words in my searches, I only found three studies that related to how individuals perceive their learning difference and three studies on how individuals understood their diagnosis when they were identified with a learning difference.

Perceptions of a Learning Difference

Heyman (1990) conducted a study of 87 children with learning differences in grades 3 through 6 to better understand how children perceived their learning differences. The Self-Perception of Learning Disability (SPLD) assessment was used to measure the extent to which children with learning differences perceived their disability as (a) delimited rather than global, (b) modifiable rather than permanently limiting, and (c) not stigmatizing. Additional assessments were the Self-Esteem Inventory and Student's Perception of Ability Scale. Findings revealed that higher self-esteem in children with learning differences was related to perceiving their learning difference as changeable and as non-stigmatizing. This finding suggested that knowledge of dyslexia may provide a more positive perspective for children by understanding that dyslexia is not an issue of intelligence.

Ferri, Connor, Solis, Valle, and Volpitta (2005) examined how four teachers with learning differences constructed their own understandings of having a learning difference. Data was collected through one-on-one interviews and a follow-up group meeting where the researchers shared their preliminary findings with the participants. Three of the participants were K-12 special education teachers and one was a student teacher. All of the participants knew something wasn't right and felt they were different when they started to attend school. They all discussed a lack of understanding in regard to their learning and knowledge of their learning difference, and were aware of the stigma attached to them because of that learning difference. According to Ferri et al. (2005), being diagnosed with a learning difference can be problematic for students because of the normative culture of schools. The researchers indicated each of these individuals had been influenced, in one way or another, by the cultural tropes that have affected their stories. The findings illuminated the perspectives of individuals with a learning difference as well as highlighted the areas that had the greatest impact on their school experience.

The effects of having a learning difference extended far beyond the formal school years. Raskind, Margalit, and Higgins (2006) examined what children's understanding of their learning difference was in online messages on a public website designed for children with learning and attention problems. The site was designed as a safe environment for children to present their self-identities as children with learning differences and to share personal meanings of their challenges. The purpose of the study was to examine the presentation of these interactions to develop a deeper understanding of their feelings, attitudes, and thoughts. Theme analysis was used on 4,903 emails sent from 164 self-identified participants between 9 and 18 years of age. Findings indicated many of these children struggled with understanding their learning difference and what it meant to who they were in the world. Many children expressed distress, while others seemed to accept their difficulties (Raskind et al., 2006). This study showed that students with

learning differences were challenged by more than academic and learning success. What is not known are the experiences that impacted children with dyslexia to better understand how school, teachers, and peers hinder or foster feelings of care and wellbeing.

The Impact of a Learning Difference Diagnosis

Investigation into studies of how children make meaning of a learning difference led to three studies that explored the impact of a learning difference diagnosis. These three studies focused on how the diagnosis impacted the participants more than a label or the stigma of a label.

Barga (1996) conducted a study to examine factors that contributed to the success of students with learning differences in schools. Barga (1996) interviewed and observed 9 students that had learning differences enrolled in a 4-year university over a 6-month period. Findings indicated that identification of a learning difference could be a positive experience because it helped the students make sense of their academic struggles and resulted in them receiving school support. The study suggested there were positive aspects of students being identified and diagnosed with a learning difference, but it was not known if a positive outcome may be different for children beyond this sample.

MacMaster, Donovan, and MacIntyre (2002) explored the dilemma of assigning a diagnosis to children with learning differences in elementary school using a quasi-experimental design. A sample of 33 children with learning differences in grades 3 to 6 from six elementary schools and a control group of 30 children without learning differences from 2 fifth-grade classes participated in the study. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was used as a measure of self-esteem and given as a pretest before children received a diagnosis for a learning difference, and then as a posttest after receiving the diagnosis for having a learning difference. Their findings showed the children diagnosed with learning differences reported higher levels of self-esteem following their diagnosis than before being diagnosed. The children identified as having specific learning

differences were put into a single category, as if they all have similar experiences.

Kenyon, Beail, and Jackson (2014) explored what it was like for people to find out they had a learning difference. Participants were recruited from self-advocacy organizations, day services, and newly diagnosed patients. There were seven participants all of whom had the label of "learning disability" applied to their diagnosis. The majority of them received their diagnosis during school. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews that focused on their experience of diagnosis and its impact. All participants described being noticed as different at school due to their academic ability and having to receive additional help. The results of the study showed the participants' understanding of a learning difference started in childhood and continued into adulthood, where they continued to struggle with positive feelings about living with a learning difference.

The research studies show both positive and negative perspectives as to how individuals experience identification of a learning difference. What is not known from these studies is how children understand dyslexia as a learning difference and how dyslexia affects their beliefs of their own competence. What is also missing is how children with dyslexia perceive how others see them as members in their communities of learning.

Early Intervention

Early interventions for kindergarten students who are at-risk could improve reading outcomes as they move forward in school. Empirical studies with varying designs have provided evidence that if children receive early intervention, they could be put on a path toward normal reading development. For example, Lennon and Sleskinski (1999) examined early intervention with 16 of the lowest-scoring kindergarten students from five elementary schools for 10 weeks. Results from the investigation showed intensive intervention was found to improve multiple measures of reading performance for all of the kindergarten students, and students that extended

their intervention to 20 weeks improved their standing among all participants. Three studies showed that kindergarten intervention was beneficial for at-risk readers and children with disabilities. Schneider, Roth, and Ennemoser (2000) compared the effects of 3 kindergarten intervention programs with138 kindergarten children potentially at risk for dyslexia and assigned to one of three training groups. Their results found the students assigned to a combined training in phonological awareness and letter knowledge showed the strongest effects on reading and spelling in grades 1 and 2. A synthesis (Kim, Vaughn, Wanzek, Wei, 2004) of 27 intervention studies to examine the effects of school-based interventions for kindergarten students found that reading interventions were effective for improving reading outcomes for both kindergarten students at risk for reading difficulties and students with disabilities. In a follow-up synthesis of early elementary (K-3) studies, (Wanzek and Vaughn (2007) explored intervention intensiveness. Findings from18 studies revealed positive outcomes for students with disabilities and those that were at risk for reading difficulties. Results also showed effect sizes were larger if the intervention involved students in kindergarten or first grade.

Two experimental design studies investigated intervention with kindergarten students. A 2010 experimental design study (Dion, Brodeur, Gosselin, Campeau, & Fuchs) investigated teacher-implemented reading interventions with 256 kindergarteners that were placed into two groups. Findings showed the high-risk students that received intervention in both kindergarten and first grade had decoding skills comparable, on average, to those of their low-risk peers. In another experimental study, Little et al. (2012) assigned 103 kindergarten students identified as at risk for reading failure to one of two versions of an early reading intervention. Students assigned to the experimental condition received intervention with adjustments in intensity that was based on student performance, while the comparison group received the intervention without instructional modifications. Findings showed the experimental group outperformed the

comparison group at the end of kindergarten and continued the advantage at the end of first grade. The findings from these studies show empirical evidence that early intervention was effective for kindergarten students at risk for reading difficulties as prevention for later reading failure.

Delayed identification and support for struggling readers only widens the gap between strong and struggling readers (Stanovich, 1986). Longitudinal studies (McNamura, Scissons, & Gutknecth, 2011; Shaywitz, Morris, & Shaywitz, 2008) have shown when identification and reading support for at-risk students in kindergarten is delayed, the gap to meet year-end benchmarks continues to increase and get more difficult to remediate as children progress through the grades. According to Shaywitz, Morris, and Shaywitz (2008), their findings indicated that after second grade it was more challenging to bring children to expected grade levels once(they fell behind. Results from both longitudinal studies showed that as children progressed from kindergarten through the elementary grades, the majority of students that were at the lower end of the reading achievement scale in kindergarten remained in that position for subsequent years, if they were not given additional reading support. What is not included in these studies of children that attended early intervention is how their reading struggles affected how they experienced school.

Failing to address reading problems in early grades becomes increasingly problematic as students advance through elementary school and beyond. Students in the upper elementary grades that are at risk for reading failure often require intervention in multiple reading domains, which requires remediation that is more complex. For example, Ritchey, Silverman, Montanaro, Speece, and Schatschneider (2012) investigated 123 fourth-grade students identified as having a high probability of reading failure. Results from the study were mixed with some areas showing more progress than others due to the fact that several areas required remediation, such as

decoding, fluency, and comprehension. In a longitudinal study, O'Connor, Bocian, Sanchez, and Beach (2014) assessed 410 at-risk kindergarten and first grade students to explore their reading outcomes at the end of 2nd grade. Findings showed that those that participated in early reading intervention improved reading outcomes whether they received intervention in kindergarten or first grade. However, 45% of the children that had access to intervention in kindergarten reached the exit criteria before the end of second grade, whereas only 26% of those that began intervention in first grade met exit criteria by the end of 2nd grade, more than 505 of at-risk children remained in need of literacy support. Early intervention helps to minimize the proportion of students who remain in high-risk groups for reading difficulties. What is not known from these studies is how at-risk readers perceived their competency as they engaged in intervention and how those perceptions affected the shaping or reshaping of their literate identity.

Two additional studies showed that as students received intervention later in elementary school, the gaps in meeting grade level expectancy were more difficult to achieve. Ritchey, Palombo, Silverman, and Speece (2017) investigated reading intervention for 46 fifth-grade students with poor reading comprehension. After 20 hours of intervention that targeted reading comprehension strategy instruction, results showed only small gains on norm-referenced comprehension outcomes. Partanen, Siegel, and Giaschi (2019) examined the outcomes of an intensive reading program for third grade students in a longitudinal study over three months. Comparison groups of intense, poor, and good readers were formed. The intensive group showed substantial improvements in reading skills, however, a significant gap between the intensive group, the poor readers group, and the good readers group persisted in the third and fourth grades. Findings from these studies indicated that when intervention was delayed beyond the early grades, there was more likelihood that students would need extended interventional support to close the increasing gaps in literacy practices. What is not known from these studies is how

the students felt in their classrooms being aware that their literacy abilities were not on level with their peers, and in what ways those feelings affected their learning.

Conclusion

School is a social institution that functions as a place of learning and growth for children. For learning and positive personal growth to occur in school, children need to feel cared for and accepted from both teachers and peers. A review of the literature has focused on school relationships and engaging learning environments that affect children's learning and how literacy practices influence who they believe they are as readers and writers. There are few empirical studies on how children perceive their learning difference, how they see themselves as literate people, or how they experience school. Perspectives from children with a learning difference extends our understanding of how the social practices of school impact and influence those who do not perceive themselves as part of the cultural norm.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to investigate how six children diagnosed with dyslexia made sense of the label, the factors and outcomes that shape their literate identity, and how they experience school as a student with dyslexia. Specifically, the research questions are what meanings do children identified with dyslexia construct for that learning difference, how do they see themselves as literate people, and what is it like to experience school as a student with dyslexia?

Research Design

The research design most appropriate for this study drew upon a phenomenological perspective that studies the lived experiences of individuals that share a common phenomenon to describe "what one perceives, senses, and knows in one's immediate awareness and experience" (Kockelmans, 1967, p. 24). A phenomenological design views experiences as conscious ones (van Manen, 1990) and developing descriptions of these experiences consists of "what" is experienced and "how" it is experienced (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology grounded in the Heideggerian tradition does not seek universal truths of a person's being-in-the-world but rather the idea that knowledge of our everyday existence is intersubjective and relational. A world of intersubjectivity involves "interaction, community and communication" in which we engage in and out of, to become individuals, and to live as individuals (Crotty, 1998). A hermeneutic phenomenology methodology works well with this study because it provides a way of translating the meaning of lived experiences from a specific group of participants to inform current thinking and practice in education disciplines (Spiegelberg, 1960). A central practice of hermeneutic research is to immerse oneself in the participants' world in order to understand and interpret their everyday experiences (Crabtree & Miller, 1992). Researchers must enter into an active dialogue with the research participants and maintain a questioning attitude to look for both meaning and

misunderstandings. By offering a narrative account of the participants' everyday practices, new possibilities for self-reflection may occur to better understand the complex lifeworld of a group of individuals who have all experienced the same phenomenon within the same cultural context (Crabtree & Miller, 1992).

This type of study requires intentionality to create an inseparable connectedness to a person's way of being-in-the-world to describe and interpret the various aspects of how they experience it (Heidegger, 1962). The goal is to understand what they experienced and how they experienced it (Moustakas, 1994). This phenomenological study describes the meaning of a group of individuals who have been diagnosed with dyslexia in an attempt to reduce their experiences to a description of the universal essence, or a "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (van Manen, 1990, p. 170). By using a phenomenological approach for this study, the ability to capture a deeper understanding of the interviewed population was achieved by data that was collected from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon.

Table 1

Study Research Questions and Matching Data Sources

Research Question	Data Source
1. What meanings do children with dyslexia construct for their learning difference?	Semi-Structured Interview
2. How do they see themselves as literate people?	Semi-Structured Interview Self-Reflection Written Statement Artifact
3. What is it like to experience school as a student with dyslexia?	Semi-Structured Interview

Participants

The six participants in this study were students in grades four through eight who had been identified as having dyslexia. In order to participate children had to meet three criteria: (1) each participant had to be identified with dyslexia as the core learning disability, (2) each one had to have been diagnosed with dyslexia by a clinical diagnostician or by a professional certified to screen for dyslexia; and (3) each participant must have attended formal schooling in a public, private, or charter school and be in grades four through eight at the time of the study. The grade levels were chosen for two reasons. First, the grade levels were chosen to optimize the level of children's oral depictions of their experience. Second, the children would have been identified as having dyslexia within a recent time frame. All of them were currently receiving intervention for dyslexia either inside or outside of school, with the exception of one, who had completed 3-years of intervention services. Five of the six children were from suburbs within a large metropolitan area, and one of the children was from a small rural town.

Chloe. Chloe (all participant names in this research are pseudonyms chosen by the children) was an outgoing and talkative 13-year-old girl who attended public middle school who had been diagnosed with dyslexia when she was in fourth grade. She began receiving intervention from her mother who was working to become a certified dyslexia therapist to support Chloe's learning as she progressed through school. Chloe described herself as being a bad reader when she was younger, because she read books in the baby section, but felt much better about herself as a reader at the time of the interview. She stated she could read the "big books and feels that's fun" (interview 1, line 10).

Brooklyn. Brooklyn was a quiet and soft-spoken 14-year-old girl who was diagnosed with dyslexia when she was in third grade. Brooklyn received intervention for 2-years during her fourth and fifth grade years outside of school. She attended a private school that provided

ongoing intervention for students identified with dyslexia, as well as modifications, and technology tools to support those students. She stated that she thought of herself as a good reader only sometimes. She felt writing was harder for her than reading due to trying to sound words out, punctuation, and spelling and enjoyed expressing herself through drawing.

Reynold. Reynold was an outgoing 10-year-old boy who attended public school. He was diagnosed with dyslexia in first grade and was receiving intervention for dyslexia outside of school. He stated that he liked reading and it was "like going into a whole-different world of imagination." He explained it as it "gives ups and downs" (interview 1, line 84), but "I've improved a lot at reading" (interview 1, line 18).

Parker. Parker was a 15-year-old boy that had been diagnosed with dyslexia in fifth grade. Parker attended public school and had been receiving private tutoring outside of school for two years. He admitted that it had helped, but he didn't like it. He stated, "I don't like to read so, I'm not a good reader" (interview 1, line 15). He also stated that he wasn't good at writing, noting on a scale of 1-10, his writing was a one.

Ashley. Ashley was a soft-spoken 13-year-old girl that attended public school and had been diagnosed with dyslexia in second grade. Ashley had been in and out of different intervention programs, both in school and outside of school, for the past several years. She has used some technology tools to assist her in her classes at school. She stated that she was a terrible reader, and that she just "can't do it" (interview 1, line 8). She believed she was a bad reader because of the dyslexia. She stated that she would rather just show what she knows through drawing rather than writing.

Jeff. Jeff was a 12-year-old boy who attended public school and had been diagnosed with dyslexia when he was in second grade. Jeff had completed three years of intervention and was able to articulate both his strengths and weaknesses in both reading and writing. He stated that he

thought he was a good reader, “but I don’t trust myself” (interview 1, line 3). He admitted that it was still hard for him to read, but stated that no one recognized that he had a hard time with reading and writing because he is was straight A student, “so they don’t think I struggle in really anything” (interview 1, line 262).

Procedures

Recruitment Procedures

The participating students were recruited through a two-step process. First, I contacted the president of Decoding Dyslexia Oklahoma (DDOK) to solicit assistance in contacting and recruiting participants for this study. I discussed details about the study. I offered to make a presentation to their chapter explaining my study to recruit participants. An email was sent to DDOK members giving information about the research project and asking the members who would be interested in attending one of the presentations. Because of schedule conflicts, I was provided with a list of seven parent names and phone numbers to contact after the chapter president had contacted each family. I contacted each family individually by telephone, explained the research, and asked if they would be interested in participating. Six families agreed to participate in the study. Times and locations were set with the parents for getting written permission, assenting the child, and completing the first interview. After parents signed the parent permission form, they left the room so that I could assent their child. After a child had signed the assent form, they chose a pseudonym, and completed a Demographic Information and Self-Reflection Form.

Data Sources

There were two data sources that were used to understand children’s experiences of dyslexia. One data source was a self-reflection statement completed by each child prior to the first interview. The second data source was two semi-structured interviews that occurred at two

different times.

Self-Reflection Statement

The self-reflection statement was included on a demographic information form that the children received on the first interview (see Appendix A for Demographic Information & Self- Reflection Form). The purpose of the self-reflection statement was for the children to describe themselves as a literate person. They were asked to respond to the following statement: "Please describe yourself as a reader and writer in written form or by drawing a picture below. If you would like to do both, please feel free to do both. You choose." I provided crayons, colored markers, pencils, and pens for the children to use in their response. The children could take as long as they wanted to complete the form. Also, on the sheet was a section for the children to complete demographic information about themselves. It took about 10 minutes to complete.

Semi-Structured Interviews

There were two semi-structured interviews with each child. The purpose of the first interview was to explore how the children understood dyslexia and the meaning of its label, how dyslexia affected their literate identity, and how the children experienced school through their stories. The first group of questions in the interview focused on how the children understood dyslexia as a learning difference. These questions were used to gain a deeper insight into how the children understood dyslexia. Questions included ones about their feelings when they found out they had dyslexia and how they made sense of the diagnosis. The second group of questions focused on how the children viewed themselves as readers and writers. The questions focused on the affective nature of their reading and writing experiences. The third group of questions asked the children how they experienced school, including questions focusing on feelings about school, what they would want to tell their teachers about dyslexia, and their identity as members of their class.

Each interview took place at the child's home, and was audio taped and transcribed. I began the interviews with casual conversation to get to know the child. I used probes to help the children further elaborate on their responses with the intent to gather more in-depth data regarding how they felt about themselves as literate people. At the conclusion of the first interview, I gave the children a half-sheet of paper that asked each child to bring artifacts that reflected their feelings about themselves before and after their diagnosis for our second and final interview. The two items they chose were totally up to them. I told the children they could depict their feelings in various ways such as a written piece, drawings, photographs, poetry, school papers, recordings, or an artistic expression that they felt was reflective of these two time periods.

The second interviews were conducted within a week of the first one. The purpose of the second interview was for the children to share artifacts as reflections of their experience (see Appendix B for the second interview protocol). The children first shared the artifact that represented how they felt before being diagnosed with dyslexia. I asked them to describe the artifact and to explain why that object was chosen. Next, children shared their second artifact and explained why that object was selected as a representation of how they felt after being diagnosed with dyslexia. The artifacts were used to enhance and verify the interviews and varied from pictures to three-dimensional performances. All interviews were audiotaped and transcribed and the artifacts were collected.

Subjectivity Statement

I instruct children with dyslexia as a reading specialist in a public school and privately tutor children with dyslexia outside of school. I have learned there are no two children with dyslexia who are alike. Although they share the same common thread of lacking phonological awareness, each one has strengths and weaknesses that make them who they are as individuals. I

have an intense interest in how children with dyslexia have compensated for their learning challenges in reading and writing. I have become inspired by their hard work and courage to progress despite their learning differences.

Because of my drive to educate children that are challenged to learn to read and write within grade-level standards, I have spent the past several years acquiring training to become certified as a dyslexia therapist. I am drawn to study how children understand dyslexia and how they experience school because I have difficulty knowing myself what hinders or supports their successes. I struggle for clarity wondering if it is the label that is a source of shame and embarrassment or how the diagnosis is presented and explained. I wonder how school can provide positive pathways for these children that have this reading and writing difficulty. I wonder what impact teachers and policymakers could make if we better understood how these children perceive their learning differences and how teaching practices and school environments impact their abilities to succeed.

My experiences over the past several years teaching children with dyslexia has led me to advocate for this group at my site-building and at the district level; however, I remain conflicted in what ways these children can best be served and supported to ensure their academic success and mental well-being. For these reasons, this study is important to me personally and I believe essential for its social meaning. It is every citizen's right to learn to read and write, and I believe the population with dyslexia requires more in-depth research of how they experience their learning differences to better understand how schools and educators can support them to become active participants in the world.

I have a dual position as an advocate for these children and an educator, which could potentially cloud my interpretations. Key to a phenomenological study is the ability to describe the lived experiences of individuals without the obstruction of pre-conceptions or theoretical

notions. To ensure my beliefs did not interfere with the participants' stories, a reflective log was kept that recorded my interactions with the participants throughout the study. Writing and reflecting on what could taint my understandings of the participant's voices helped me to bracket my personal feelings and experiences working with this group of children. Bias in qualitative research requires special guidelines that must be adhered to (Moustakas, 1994). Through bracketing, I strived to suspend my own beliefs, judgments, and bias when describing the lived experiences of the participants. The subjective nature of qualitative research makes it incumbent on the researcher to expose any preexisting assumptions that might influence the process. Bracketing personal experiences is challenging for researchers to implement because interpretations of the data always incorporate the assumptions that the researcher brings to the topic (van Manen, 1990). My approach to the bracketing process began from the study's conception and continued throughout the research endeavor.

Memo writing occurred throughout the study (Birks & Mills, 2011; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Memo writing and constant comparative analysis helped me to minimize bias. Both activities are reflective in nature to help ensure objectivity throughout the study (Birks & Mills, 2011). Memos helped me to see new descriptors as they emerged. The memos served to help me bracket my beliefs and personal biases that I may have subconsciously brought into analyzing and interpreting the children's responses by reminding me to separate my thoughts from the meaning of the children's responses. Memos included my initial thoughts on the interview process, emerging codes, and reflections on the behaviors of the children during the course of each interview. Reflexivity is an essential component that helps to legitimize and validate investigative practices (Silverman, 2016). By bracketing the research through reflexivity, I worked to negate my predispositions about children with dyslexia.

Data Analysis

An inductive analysis approach was used to answer the research questions. This analytic approach was used to determine codes, determine patterns, and uncover themes. I first used open coding to determine codes to help answer my research questions.

Data analysis began as soon as the first two children's interviews were transcribed. I began my analysis of the first child's interview by reading the transcript in its entirety. I then reread the interview and began developing codes from the responses. I then read the second child's transcript in its entirety, and upon the second reading began developing codes. Next, I read the first child's interview again and underlined phrases as they pertained to each one of my three research questions by referencing each phrase to the related research question. For example, if a phrase pertained to my first research question, I marked it (MD) for meaning of dyslexia, (LI) for literate identity, and (ES) for experiencing school. I then reread the second child's transcript and underlined phrases that referenced and pertained to my three research questions in the same manner. I reread those two transcripts a third time and began open coding by placing written codes on the transcripts that represented my interpretations of the meaning behind their responses. During the process of open coding, I kept the research questions in front of me to keep me focused on how the participants' responses related to the research questions (LeCompte, Preissle, & Tesch (1993).

After the first two transcripts were coded, I began to read the additional interviews one at a time. On the second reading of each transcript, I began applying the codes I had developed from the first two transcripts, adding new codes as they emerged from the data. At this point in the analysis, it became evident that the experience of dyslexia occurred within three distinct time periods. The first time frame was how the children experienced dyslexia before receiving intervention, the second time frame was how they experienced dyslexia while receiving intervention, and the third time frame pertained to one participant who had completed years of

intervention. It then became necessary to organize the data within time sequences as they pertained to each research question. I then revisited the codes to reorder them into the appropriate time sequence: before, during, and after receiving intervention. To allow for further insights into the relationships between the children's responses and the given codes, I listed each of the children in my codebook, the frequency of their responses, and the children's quotations that related to each code. Each transcript was read several more times for any missing phrases or insights that might have been missed or should be added to the codebook. Once these analytic procedures were completed, coding of the second interview with the children's artifacts took place.

First, I looked closely at each artifact the children gave me that represented how they felt before they were identified as having dyslexia and how they felt after they were diagnosed. I read each transcript in its entirely. I then reread each transcript one at a time, line by line, and began applying codes that had been developed from the first interview, being aware new codes may emerge. No new codes emerged from the second interviews. I then added the children's direct quotations from the second interview to the related codes in the codebook. The last data source I analyzed was the self-reflection forms. I looked carefully at each of the six children's representations that described themselves as readers and writers at the time of our first meeting. I created a matrix with each child's name with descriptors of their representations from the self-reflection forms using the words they chose or descriptions of the pictures they drew. I then began open coding the self-reflection data by applying the codes from the interviews that aligned with literate identity and the current time period that was reflected in their responses. No new codes emerged from the self-reflection forms. Five of the six children's depictions reflected how they felt about themselves as readers and writers during a time period when they were receiving some form of intervention. One of the participant's reflections was a representation of how he

felt about himself as a reader and writer at the time of our meeting, after he had completed intervention services. These codes were used for triangulation once all data had been coded and analyzed.

Next, I noted the commonalities of codes and began to convert the codes into categories. By organizing the codes into categories I was able to establish relationships between the codes and identify codes that might be over-lapping or repetitive (Glaser, 1978). The constant comparison of codes helped me to clarify in my own mind what meaning was coming through the participants' voices by deeply reflecting on the meanings from each line of the participants' transcripts. Table 2 is an example of how the codebook was created applying a temporal sequence with related categories, codes, and quotations from the children that was used for axial coding (see Appendix H for the full codebook).

Table 2

Research Question 1: "What meanings do children with dyslexia construct for their learning difference?

Codebook Example of Time Sequence and Coding Format

Before Intervention			
	Category	**Code**	**Example**
	Confusion or lack of understanding of dyslexia		
		No meaning	R1 (202) "I didn't understand what it meant yet."
		No memory	C1 (83) "I just can't remember it."

		of being told	
		Confusion	B1 (49) “It was confusing because I didn’t understand what dyslexia was.”
During/After Intervention			
	Awareness and understanding of dyslexia		
		Individual awareness of what dyslexia is	B1 (43-44) “It was difficult at first, but now, I see it as someone normal just having trouble reading and writing.”
		Defining dyslexia	J1 (92-93) “It’s like you can have trouble writing, you can have trouble spelling you could have trouble reading.”
		Positive feeling and relief	C1 (99-101) “Because I have something, I’m proud of. I’m dyslexic and it means I have a learning disability. Before, I’d be like I’m not dumb.”
		Negative Feelings	P1 (297) “I’m just done with it.”

I then began axial coding to look for connections between the categories. Strauss and Corbin (1990) use the word axial to denote the idea of putting an axis through the data, where an axis connects the categories identified in open coding (Glaser, 1978). The purpose of axial coding

was to gain an understanding of the central phenomenon that exists within the data in terms of the conditions which give rise to it, the context in which it is embedded, and the consequences of those strategies (Punch, 2005). The categories were worked and reworked to ensure that all codes had been considered and placed appropriately in categories.

The codebook served as a visual tool to provide a constant comparison of codes that helped me clarify what meaning was coming through the children's' voices to better understand their responses.

At this point in the analysis, I began to synthesize what had been gleaned from the data to construct a more complete depiction of the meanings and overall essence of the phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). The goal of this multi-step analysis was to develop core themes to describe the experience of children with dyslexia from the perspective of those that live with it.

Through the process of using a reflective method of thoughtfulness and writing, my aim was to "open up possibilities for creating a relationship between who we are and how we act" (van Manen, 2014, p.69). I reflected on the categories that were uncovered from the data sources and applied those units of meaning to develop themes. In order for themes to arise, I studied the codes, categories, and frequency of significant statements from each participant per research question. I looked deeper into the meaning and explanations for the participants' responses. I looked across all participants' codes and responses to see how they were related or connected to see to what extent they impacted each other. Recognizing each person is their own case, I looked for similarities and differences among the participants. After going through this multilayered analysis approach, I began writing down possible themes that were emerging across the data. I continued looking at the frequency of similar responses, the context of the response, and any responses that may not be similar and why those responses differed from the majority of the children. I continued to compare and contrast the individual responses with note taking and

thought until a set of themes had been derived for each research question. I reworked the themes multiple times to ensure I was staying true to the meaning of the children's voices and to note what aspects of their responses were encompassed within the emerging themes. I revisited the themes several times to ensure I had accurately portrayed specific time frames within the context of the children's responses. For example, there are clear time periods pertaining to two of my research questions, before the children received intervention, during, and after they completed intervention. For my first research question I found only two time periods were significant to answer the research question; before intervention was received and after receiving intervention. This process helped me to ensure the frequency and patterns of responses were not a list of findings, but a process to weave the findings together from all data sources.

Trustworthiness

In this study I was not seeking to make generalizations or explanations, but to allow for transferability by my ability to provide a robust account of the children's experiences. An audit trail was conducted to enhance the rigor and trustworthiness of the study. The purpose of the audit served a dual function. The first function was to confirm the accuracy of the findings and to ensure that the results were supported by the data collected. The second function was to ensure objectivity was maintained since the intrusion of biases is inevitable.

I had two researchers from my field audit the analysis of data and procedures in order to increase trustworthiness. First, I had several discussions with my research advisor during the process of code development, where codes were discussed, defined, compared, and in some cases combined. After I had all my data coded, I conferred with another researcher from my field to audit the analysis of data and procedures in order to increase trustworthiness. This process helped me to ensure my codes, categories, and findings were clear and transparent. The audit consisted of four parts. First, I explained my study and presented my research questions. Second,

I went over my coding chart in detail to ensure my codes and definitions of the codes were clear. Third, I reviewed a coded transcription and explained my thinking as we discussed the notes I took and codes that I applied. Lastly, I asked her to code a blank transcript to see if she coded it in a similar way. The coding and notes she made on her copy of the transcript mirrored the coding I had applied and the insights I had gleaned from the data. The goal of this chapter was to outline the research method used to answer the research questions. Once I completed data analysis and determined the themes, I looked across the themes and developed an interpretation that expressed the answers to my research questions. The findings will be presented by research question, and in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate how children with dyslexia in grades four through eight understood and experienced their learning difference. There was a shared commonality across all of the participants that dyslexia was a problem that affected reading, writing, and spelling, but could affect their ability to be successful in other areas of their lives. The findings in this chapter are organized according to each research question. The key finding that emerged from the data was that all th e children's understandings occurred within two distinct time frames: before they were diagnosed and received intervention and after they began intervention services. After beginning intervention services, all of the children began to understand what their challenges were, and may always be, due to the nature and characteristics of dyslexia. These children began to make progress in basic literacy skills. The findings also showed that the majority of children who received intervention early in their school careers were able to renegotiate their literate identities and experience school more positively. This chapter will address how these children, over time, made meaning of dyslexia, how they formed and renegotiated their beliefs of who they were as literate people, and how school was experienced before and after receiving intervention services.

Meanings of Dyslexia

Each of the six participants discussed a lack of understanding of what dyslexia was when they were initially identified and were confused or uncertain how the diagnosis pertained to their ability to learn how to read and write. A common theme across all of the children was that once they began intervention services, they were able to make their own personal meanings and understandings of dyslexia as a learning difference.

Before Intervention

All of the children felt confused and did not understand what dyslexia was when they

were initially identified. A majority of the children remembered going through diagnostic testing both in and outside of school, but did not remember anyone explaining to them what it meant when they were diagnosed. For example, Reynold remembered thinking, "so what does it matter that I'm dyslexic?" (interview 1, line 107). He explained that the diagnosis made no difference to him at the time and he only cared about how he was going to be able to read and write like the other children he observed in school. When two of the children were told they had dyslexia they said nothing changed for them at all and they felt the same as they did before they knew their struggles were due to a phonological deficit. Parker said he didn't have a feeling of relief and it didn't help, "it just didn't" (interview 1, line 83). The difficulty for a majority of the children did not lie in receiving a diagnosis for their literacy learning challenges, but rather not knowing if there was a remedy to ease the difficulty in learning to read and write.

In addition to feeling confused about why they were not able to read and progress like the other children they observed, all of the children began to believe something was wrong with them and that they were not capable of learning like the other children in their classes. Two of the children recalled thinking they just were not smart. Jeff said, "Like, I thought I was dumb" (interview 1, line 44). Chloe had a similar feeling and said, "I never understood what it was. I always knew there was something wrong with me…. before, I'd be like I'm dumb" (interview 1, line 42, 44).

During and After Receiving Intervention

For a majority of the children these understandings did not occur immediately after intervention services began. After receiving intervention for a year or more, a majority of the children began to understand the areas of their learning that were affected by having a phonological deficit. They were able to construct a new sense of awareness of both their literacy strengths and weaknesses. For example, Brooklyn explained her understanding of dyslexia as,

"Someone normal just having trouble reading and writing…we're not really different, we just have more struggles, we just learn differently than other people do" (interview 1, lines 44, 242-243). Jeff spoke about specific areas that affected how he learned, for example, "Now I know that it's like you can have trouble writing, you can have trouble spelling, or you could have trouble reading" (interview 1, lines 92-93). One of the children had knowledge of how the dyslexic brain functions and how she accepted her learning difference. Chloe said, "It is hard to read, we process with the other side of our brain and that's where other stuff takes place…it means I have a learning disability" (interview one, lines 32-33, 99-100). She was able to understand dyslexia as a learning difference once she understood that it wasn't that she couldn't learn how to read or write, but rather there was a reason why she struggled. She said, "If you saw my room, you would know how good it feels…I'm not dumb, I'm smart. I actually have something that I'm proud of" (Interview 1, lines 51-52, 66-67). One of the children related how he understood dyslexia to how he learned to read and spell by addressing the connection between phonemes and graphemes. For example, he said, "I'm learning like combinations, like coding the words. It helps me, so when I learn everything, I will be able to look at a word and code it in my head and just know the word" (interview 1, lines 332-334). After completing three years of intervention one student developed a strong work ethic to persevere through his learning difficulties. Jeff explained that dyslexia "made me realize that I will have troubles reading, even after therapy, but I just keep trying to get better" (interview 1, line 20-21).

Literate Identity: Renegotiation and Uncertainty

All of the children had a negative literate identity before they were diagnosed with dyslexia as they continued to fail to learn how to read and write proficiently. A majority of the children that received a targeted intervention that addressed their phonological deficit early in their schooling were able to renegotiate their literate identities to support more positive views of

themselves as readers and writers. Two of the children retained negative literate identities, because over time they made only minimal progress in learning literacy, which fostered feelings of defeat, apathy toward school, and negative perceptions of their ability to become proficient as literate people. The findings will be organized using the aspects of literate identity that are in the literature: how an individual feels about themselves as a literate person, how an individual feels they are progressing in their abilities to become literate, how they see themselves as compared to others, and how they perceive others see them as being literate, and how they feel doing literacy activities.

Before Intervention

Before intervention, all of the children believed they were not good readers or writers. All six participants described negative feelings because of their inability to successfully decode and encode text. Two of the children discussed that they felt different from other members of their learning community. These children demonstrated negative literate identities prior to receiving intervention due to their constant struggle to learn the literacy skills they perceived as important and valued by those they interacted with in school.

How they felt about themselves as readers and writers. Prior to receiving intervention, there were common threads throughout all of the children's conversations, which were confusion over why they were unable to read and write as well as an acute awareness of their struggle to become literate. All of the children had a keen awareness of their inability to read and write with fluency and proficiency. In first grade, Reynold said he would pick up a book and say, "Why am I doing this, I can't read it" (interview 1, line 144). Ashley discussed how she would lose track of what she wanted to say when she tried to write and put her thoughts on paper. She said, "Just thinking and then going, what did I say? (interview 1, line 33, 400). All of the children talked about their inability to spell correctly, which made them feel less competent in their abilities to

write. For example, Chloe said, “Spelling’s bad. I don’t know how to spell a lot of stuff” (interview 1, line 26, 28). Brooklyn felt writing was harder than reading and said, “trying to sound it out, punctuation, and spelling” (interview 1, line 32). All of the children said they were able to memorize small words, but when they encountered multisyllabic words or words that were not in their lexicon, they were not able to apply any decoding skills to unknown words.

Reynold described his abilities to read as, “I would read like two words and then get caught, and then read the next three words, and then get caught…I would have to put my finger and follow it down to the next sentence” (interview 1, lines 149-150, 151-152). Chloe discussed how she was confused in how she could progress from third grade to fourth grade, remembering at the time she could hardly read, for example, she said, “ I passed my third grade test and was going into fourth grade, and I still couldn’t read.” (interview 1, lines 110-111).

How they felt about their ability to progress. Prior to receiving intervention, none of the children felt as if they were able to make significant progress in their abilities to read and write. Even when receiving additional help, the children described a lack of progress or skill improvement. The additional help included summer classes, special education services, and for one of the children, an extra year in first grade. For example, Brooklyn’s statement, “I couldn’t really tell” (interview 1, line 98) if things got better is an example of the children’s feelings about their lack of progress.

How they saw themselves as compared to others. The children all compared themselves to their peers in their classrooms and felt that their peers could successfully decode, comprehend, and participate in a variety of literacy activities while they themselves struggled to master basic skills. Brooklyn, for example, felt some of her friends “make me feel dumb sometimes” (Interview 1, line 172). She was aware her classmates were mastering more than she was in reading, writing, and spelling. She said, “I would see other people get their grades higher

than me. They didn't get their sentences corrected as much as I did" (interview 1, lines 158-159). Two of the children discussed being singled out from their classroom because of their inability to read like their peers. Both children said they had assignments read to them by other students or by the teacher at her desk. One of the children said when she would have tests that she was unable to read on her own, one of her classmates would read the tests to her outside the classroom in the hall. She said it made her feel terrible. Three of the six children discussed memories of having to read books at much lower levels than their peers throughout their elementary grades. Two of the children referenced the books they had to read as "baby books" or "little books" while their peers were able to read "big books". For example, Ashley said, "It kind of made me mad. You had to read only these books" (interview 1, lines 151-152). Chloe was so aware of the difference in book level between herself and another student in her class that when a boy was boasting about the level of book he was able to read and asked Chloe what level of book she was able to read, she lashed back at him. Unlike his peers, one of the children measured literacy abilities on a scale of one to ten, and said he felt like a five when he compared himself to others. His low rating of himself was based on seeing other children read with proficiency and said, "they would be reading a sentence, like completely reading it and flip the page, and I wouldn't be able to flip the first page" (interview 1, line 345).

How they perceived others saw them as literate people. The children did not talk much about how they thought others perceived their abilities to read or write because they knew their peers, teachers, and parents knew of their struggles, which made them feel ashamed. One of the children did discuss how she believed others judged her because of her weak abilities to read and write like the other members of her class. Brooklyn emphasized she was aware that her peers and friends knew of the discrepancy between her literacy skills and theirs, and that made her feel uncomfortable and embarrassed. She said she didn't want to talk about her struggles with anyone

"because, I was scared someone would judge me… I have a friend who would judge me and treat me differently…" (Interview 1, line 145, 147-148).

How did they feel when they did it? None of the children enjoyed reading or writing before they received a targeted intervention. Five of the six children said writing was not enjoyable and they did not like to write for pleasure. The children talked about not wanting to write because it was difficult to find the words in their head to express what they wanted to say in a sentence, and spelling the words was even worse. For example, Ashley said, "If we're writing a story in class, we have to turn it in. I'm like, all these words are messed up" (interview 1, lines 399-400).

Reading was frustrating for all of the children because they were not able to decode words or memorize many of the high frequency words, making reading almost an impossible task. For example, Reynold said sometimes he would just shut down when he had to read. He also talked about just pretending he could read in class, even though he knew he couldn't, which made him feel embarrassed. He said, "sometimes I would pretend, like with my finger following along with the words and I would look at the pictures" (interview 1, line 143). Jeff remembered in first grade coming home with fluency sheets that he had to read for one minute every night and feeling so upset because he couldn't read them despite the fact that he practiced and practiced. Ashley recalled feeling angry that she couldn't read and would just guess at what she thought the words were. She said, "I was just mad, because I had no idea what the books were about" (interview 1, line 247).

In summary, over the time period prior to receiving intervention all six children knew they were not making progress in learning to be successful readers and writers. As these children observed others in their classrooms, they saw themselves as failures in comparison to them. They believed others saw them as unsuccessful or unable to learn and progress. All of the children felt

emotions such as frustration, confusion, and feelings of "being dumb." None believed they were or could be a good reader or writer.

During and After Receiving Intervention

For a majority of the children the progress and success they experienced in learning literacy skills during and after their target intervention enabled them to reshape their negative literate identities to be more positive in many aspects. Although the majority of children were able to renegotiate their literate identities, their newfound positive feelings as readers and writers were not uniform across all aspects of their literate identities. Two of the children did not renegotiate any aspect of their negative literate identities.

How they felt about themselves as readers and writers. For a majority of the children, their newfound success in the literacy areas they had struggled with fostered positive changes in how they felt about themselves as readers and writers. Brooklyn, for example said she now felt like she was a good reader, but read better at home than at school. She said, "Sometimes I don't feel pressured when other people aren't around me" (interview 1, lines 274-275). The children began to feel a new sense of confidence in their literacy skills when participating in the literacy activities of their classroom, such as being able to write better sentences and paragraphs, despite the fact that spelling was still a challenge for all of the children. Jeff said he felt like he "can write decently well. I will occasionally misspell words I don't know how to write. I'll try to sound them out, but I might not write them perfectly every time" (interview 1, lines 33-34). When the children would talk about some of the literacy skills they were progressing in, they still lacked confidence in their abilities to be proficient. Jeff said, "I think I'm a good reader, but I don't trust myself…It's still hard for me to read" (Interview 1, line 3, 5).

Many of the children had improved their skills in decoding text and were now able to read some of the books that others in their class had talked about, which made them feel good

about themselves as readers. Chloe said, “now I get to read the big books, so that’s fun” (interview 1, line 10). She began to feel better about herself as a reader because she could read higher-level books and now participate with success in a school reading program. This program logged students reading tests after they read books independently. Prior to intervention, she never was able to meet her Accelerated Reader (AR) goal like many of her peers, but now she said she was able to meet her assigned class goal, and said, “now I get it good, so it’s okay” (interview 1, line 250). After two years of intervention, Brooklyn said she felt “pretty good because I can read chapter books” (interview 1, line 229).

Two children in particular embraced their learning difference once they began intervention and understood why they were having trouble learning to read and write. Reynold explained how he felt before and after intervention by saying, “it was pulling me down and then I got back up” (interview 1, line 26-27). He used to feel like dyslexia was a disadvantage, because it took him so long to write a sentence, read, and spell. Now, he said he felt better and more confident in his literacy abilities and considered dyslexia his super power. He said dyslexia was “like my super power now…cause not everybody has it” (interview 1, lines 81, 88). These children began to feel success in performing the literacy skills they had watched others perform with ease and because they were able to now engage in reading bigger books, their feelings of success positively enhanced their beliefs about who they were as literate people. Chloe talked about how she felt so much better now that she can read better and felt empowered to help other children with dyslexia. She said, “I just want to help kids…I want them to be like my brother and get diagnosed younger so then they don’t have to go through all this” (interview 1, line 140 141-142).

Although the majority of the children felt their abilities to read and write improved with intervention, not all children felt they were proficient readers. Ashley had not received a targeted

intervention to address her phonological deficit and continued to struggle, feeling frustrated about her abilities to read and write. She said, "I'm bad...words, everything" (interview 1, lines 6, 12-13). Parker didn't begin receiving intervention until middle school and concluded that his struggle to be a proficient reader was due to not reading. For example, he said "I don't like to read so that's why I'm not a good reader" (interview 1, line 15). Parker measured his literate abilities on a scale of 1-10, and described himself as a one. Later, he communicated through a drawing that he felt better about himself as a reader since he had begun intervention.

How they felt about their ability to progress. The majority of the children discussed how reading and writing became easier once they began a targeted intervention, despite the fact that the children still had challenges to read fluently or write with ease. Reynold said he could "read bigger words, longer sentences, and is able to express the sentence better…reading was becoming easier, not easy, but easier" (Interview 1, line 20, 325). Chloe talked about how her reading and writing had improved substantially by saying it was, "A lot, a whole lot better" (interview 1, line 97). She talked about how much easier reading was now that she had been in intervention for a couple of years. She said, "I know a lot of words, like basic words. And then I don't sound out words" (interview 1, line 117). The children that felt they had improved in their abilities to decode and encode text were no longer sanctioned to just "baby books" or books from sections of the library they were told they had to choose from, but now felt like they were able to read higher-level books they had wanted to read. For example, Chloe said, "Now I get to read the big books, so that's fun" (interview 1, line 10). Brooklyn also talked about the progress she had made as a reader, because she said, now "I read teen adult books" (interview 1, line 231). In addition to the children's ability to make progress with their literacy skills, one of the children talked about how his progress affected how he felt better about his life. Jeff said, "I could actually read better. I could write better…I just started feeling way better about school and

everything else" (Interview 1,87, 114). Through intervention, many of the children were able to understand what areas were at the core of their literacy challenges. Chloe said, "When we have a test, I study, but it doesn't stick in my brain…it's always tough. I still struggle today and you will always struggle, but it helps now" (interview 1, lines 86-89, 197-199).

For every positive feeling these children had about their progress, there was always a voice that appeared with the word, "but". Jeff talked about what he learned through intervention to support his reading, such as, taking his time reading sentences, going back and rereading, and sounding out words. He said, "I don't like doing it as much, but it helps me" (Interview 1, line 158). Parker received his intervention late in his schooling career and said it had helped, but he just did not like participating in the intervention. He said, "I don't like it. It helps me. I just don't like it…it is just a waste of my time. I like to do other stuff, not tutoring" (interview 1, line 246, 248).

All of the children spoke of reading and writing as being hard. They all discussed their spelling would always remain a challenge despite having received intervention. They talked about how they choose their words carefully when they needed to write for any occasion. Ashley said, "I do good at thinking and writing it, but I don't spell it correctly" (interview 1, line 26).

Two of the children did not receive early intervention to address their phonological deficit and did not think they were able to make progress to competently read and write. Parker was in eighth grade at the time of the study and was not identified as having dyslexia until fifth grade. He did not receive an intervention that addressed his needs until middle school. He said reading had not gotten easier since he had been in intervention and whatever progress he had made, he made on his own. Parker's negative feelings about being in intervention while in middle school were apparent. Although he knew it helped him to improve his skills to read and write, he had other things he wanted do than attend intervention as an eighth grader.

Ashley qualified for special education classes in first grade, but still had not received the intervention services she needed to progress. Her special education environments continued to be unstable and not supportive throughout her elementary years in school. Ashley had received instruction from various reading programs off and on throughout her schooling, but none of the programs were able to improve her literacy abilities to a level where she felt she had progressed in her abilities to read and write.

How they saw themselves as compared to others. Only half of the children discussed perceptions of themselves in relation to their peers once they received intervention. Three of these children discussed they were now able to read chapter books, teen books, or books they chose which made them feel like they were becoming more competent as readers like their peers. For example, Chloe was enthusiastic in how she felt about being able to read higher-level books like she had seen her classmates read, such as the series, *Dork Diaries.* She said, "I can read big books, which is always good, not reading little books" (interview 1, lines 133-134). Brooklyn said she felt better engaging in literacy activities after having received intervention, but said she still didn't like people staring at her (interview 1, line 277).

How they perceived others saw them as literate people. Five of the six of these children did not want to discuss their learning difference with their friends, even after they began to understand their learning difficulties were a result of a phonological deficit and not an intelligence issue. If they did discuss their learning difference with any of their friends, they were selective in choosing who they told. All of the children discussed how their friends, peers, and teachers do not understand dyslexia. Brooklyn felt "some people can be judgey, even though they have dyslexia they'll judge you" (interview 1, lines 277-278). For both Jeff and Brooklyn, there was a stigma attached with having literacy challenges that neither wanted to address in case they would be looked at differently from other members of their learning community.

All of the children were cognizant that they were not fully proficient in the literacy skills that were most valued to learn in school. They were careful and guarded in discussing their learning difference with others, concerned how they believed others would see them as literate people. Jeff did not want his peers to think less of him because he had struggled most of his school career in learning how to read, write, and spell. He said no one recognized that he had a hard time reading, writing, and spelling because "I am a straight A student, so they don't think I struggle with anything" (interview 1, line 263). He said he wouldn't tell any of them because "they would ask a lot of questions" (interview 1, line 289). Ashley talked about being with her friends at a sleepover and she told two of them she had dyslexia. She said, "one was like really shocked and the other one was like, okay. She doesn't know what it is…I just said I was dyslexic and moved on" (interview 1, lines 464-465, 467).

There was one child that did not comment on how he perceived his friends, peers, and adult's understanding of his learning difference, but did talk about how he wished his teachers understood more about dyslexia. He didn't seem to have negative or positive feelings about what others thought of his reading and writing abilities. This could be because he began intervention services when he was six years old and experienced success soon after he started. He had not experienced years of failure and feeling his literacy skills were being judged by his peers.

A majority of the children talked about how their teachers were aware that their learning difference was due to dyslexia once they received their diagnosis. They discussed that their teachers didn't understand how hard it was for them to read, write, and spell. For example, Jeff said, "I think they think it's like just getting words flipped around" (interview 1, line 174). Reynold said he knows his teachers know he has dyslexia and "I wish that the teachers would understand what it meant like my reading teacher…they don't quite understand what it means" (interview 1, line 295, 296).

How did they feel when they did it? The majority of the children felt better in their abilities to read and write while engaging in literacy activities once they received intervention. For example, Chloe said, "Well, I feel smart, that's always a big thing when you know you feel smart". Four of the six children began to feel less stress in their abilities to read and write. Jeff said he didn't feel the anxiety and pressure reading and writing like he did prior to intervention. He said, "when I'm writing shorter sentences it's easier" (interview 1, line 70).

Not all of the children felt they had mastered the literacy skills to be competent readers and writers because decoding and encoding text remained very difficult. Ashley and Parker had not received a targeted intervention to address their learning difference early in their schooling, so the process of reading and writing was still hard. In Parker's case, when he wrote paragraphs, he felt frustration because finding and spelling the words to put his thoughts on paper remained so difficult. Sometimes, if he had to write something for school, he said, "I wouldn't write it" (interview 1, line 50). Ashley talked about when she needed to write it was hard to "write a paragraph in your own words" (interview 1, line 337) and what would make it better was "if I didn't have to do it" (interview 1, line 339).

In summary, the time period during and after receiving intervention, a majority of the children felt as if they had experienced progress in literacy skill development. The children had feelings of uncertainty about themselves as literate people because of the hardships they experienced while learning to read and write. Many of their positive statements about making progress and feeling better about who they were as literate people had a caveat, such as, "reading is easier, not easy", and "I'm a good reader, but I still don't trust myself".

Experiencing School As A Student With Dyslexia

Each of the six participants discussed their experience of school prior to intervention as a time of frustration, and for half of the children, they described it as a time when they did not

want to attend school. Most of the children, once they began intervention, felt more positive toward school, but continued to have both positive and negative experiences. Key to how many of the children experienced school was the level of support the children received and the understanding and actions of their teachers.

Before Intervention

All of the children felt negative emotions toward school because they were not able to learn or make progress in being able to read, write, or spell words. They had difficulty making sense of why they were not progressing at the same pace as the other members of their learning communities and compared their lack of skills to other members who were more proficient in learning to read and write. Chloe recalled her feelings of frustration as early as kindergarten through third grade as "hard times with a lot of crying…it was so stressful (interview 1, lines 152-153, 263). Prior to receiving intervention, three of the children would continually shut down, ask to be homeschooled, or complain of stomachaches.

These three children discussed not wanting to go to school because of their continued failure to participate in the literacy skills, assignments, and activities of their classrooms. Reynold recalled asking his mom if he could be homeschooled in the first grade. It wasn't until Jeff was in fourth grade and had received two years of intervention that he even wanted to go to school. Prior to intervention, Jeff said he was stressed all the time because of his inability to read and write. Common discussions across all the children of why they did not want to attend school were spelling tests and homework overload. Many of the children had vivid memories of practicing days before their spelling tests. Many of the children discussed hours sitting at home writing the words over and over and staying up late, practicing spelling lists that would be on that week's spelling test. Jeff recalled, "I'd come home at 3:30 and I'd be there until 5:00...my mom and dad would get frustrated at me cause they didn't know what was happening, why I

couldn't read, why I was having trouble spelling" (interview 1, lines 125-127). The children discussed large amounts of homework they had to bring home from school. Three of the children discussed homework overload because they were also bringing classwork from the school day that hadn't been completed. Chloe said, "we would go over it just so I would get it…there was so much of it I didn't finish…and I would redo it until like seven o'clock and then take a shower, eat, and go to bed" (Interview 1, lines 152-153,161, 162-163).

A majority of the children talked about only being able to read one or two words by first and second grade and could not understand why they were not able to read more words like their peers. Brooklyn talked about getting in trouble for not reading when others in her class were reading and doing their assignments. She was so frustrated that she couldn't read that she would just draw, but confessed she couldn't read and didn't know what else to do. For three of the children, their feelings of frustration developed into anger. Parker's frustrations were so intense that he refused to even engage in literacy activities as early as kindergarten and first grade. In addition to feeling angry about their weak literacy skills, half of the children discussed not being able to comprehend text when they tried to read on their own. Ashley said she just felt mad because she had no idea what the books they were reading were about and said, "sometimes I would cheat and grab another book and just look at the pictures" (interview 1, line 152).

The children's resistance to attend school increased when they had to read longer passages of text and write paragraphs. One of the children remembered not wanting to go to school whenever she had to start reading chapter books in the second grade. A majority of the children talked about how difficult it was to put thoughts and words on paper when they needed to write sentences and paragraphs as part of their classwork. For example, Brooklyn recalled in second grade how writing got more difficult for her when she tried to write sentences. She said, "It wouldn't turn out correctly…"having to write long paragraphs and the reading tests would

stress me out (interview 1, lines 123-124, 156). Chloe had similar feelings about writing and said it was "Stressful. I don't want to write a whole paragraph. That's like not me…" (interview 1, line 263-264).

Two of the children discussed avoidance strategies they would engage in so they would not have to read or write at school. They would make up excuses to leave the classroom when they had to read out loud in class or participate in literacy activities that they were not able to do with success. Brooklyn said, "I would usually ask to go to the restroom or go to the office" (interview 1, line 181), and two of the children talked about just shutting down in the classroom if they had to read large amounts of text.

Three of the children talked about how some of their teachers in elementary school helped them by reading their assignments and tests to them before they could read. These three children talked about how they would go to their teacher's desk and the teacher would read the questions or tests to them while the other children worked independently. Ashley said, "I was okay with that…I was happy that a person could read it to me" (Interview 1, line 298, 302). Two of the children talked about how they understood the information when it was read to them and they could talk about it, but none of their teachers would ever read the information to them. Ashley talked about having to take reading tests on books they read in her special education classes and said, "I had no idea what they were about" (interview 1, line 233).

Not all of the children discussed how their teachers gave them support or understood what they were going through before they could read. Three of the children discussed how they felt so frustrated that their teacher would not help them. Ashley said if teachers do not get that I cannot read very well then "I just sit there" and it made her feel upset (interview 1, line 315). One of the children recalled her teacher insisted that she read in front of the class and would say, "just at least try" (interview 1, line 185), which made her feel embarrassed. By third grade,

classroom teachers focus much of their reading instruction on comprehension strategies and not literacy skills focused on decoding text. Chloe felt like a failure as she struggled to learn the most basic of literacy skills in third grade and remembers, "my third grade teacher told my mom I can't teach your daughter how to read" (Interview 1, lines 108-109).

During and After Intervention

For all of these children school was experienced with uncertainty, although some school days were experienced more positively than others. The children's struggles to learn how to read and write while applying what they were learning continued to present challenges. However, a majority of the children discussed more positive experiences of school once they began intervention.

School was experienced with both success and difficulty. For a majority of the children their newfound success made learning to read and write easier, but they still experienced difficulties in keeping pace with their classmates. As the children improved their literacy skills, their feelings of frustration and stress subsided because they were able to engage with more success in the literacy practices of school. For example, Jeff said, "it just made school easier for me" (interview 1, line 88).

Engaging in the literacy activities and assignments that other members of their classroom had participated in with ease were now becoming skills and activities a majority of the children could experience with some success. For example, Reynold said, "Like being able to read bigger words, longer sentences, and being able to like express the sentence better" (interview 1, lines 20-21). The amount of work they had to complete at home for homework began to subside for the majority of the children because of their increased literacy abilities. Two children said they felt school was getting better because they were able to finish their classwork at school and not have to bring it home to complete, which lessened their workload at home. For example, Chloe

said, “I have less homework to do now…and I get it done before seven o’clock” (Interview 1, line 172, 173). Jeff talked about understanding that he needed to reread sentences, sound out words, and ask questions about words he did not know. He said, “I don’t like doing it, but it helps me” (interview 1, line 158).

Three of the children discussed they were exhausted from the school day because of the amount of thinking, reading, and writing that was required at school. They talked about how hard it was to be told information, think about it, and remember it. For example, Reynold said, “it gets sometimes in the way of thinking cause you get tired of thinking, and then you’re ready to take a break and you still have to think” (interview 1, lines 53-54). Brooklyn read the first book of Percy Jackson and explained she got so tired reading the book that she didn’t continue with the rest of the series.

All of the children discussed spelling as an area of school that continued to be their weakest skill to learn and master. Although the majority of the children had received intervention to address their phonological deficit, spelling remained difficult because of all the irregularities of spelling words in the English language they had to learn or memorize. Chloe said she thought she was a good writer, but “spelling is bad” (interview 1, line 26). Jeff was aware there was a learning difference between what his peers in school were able to do with ease and where he was more challenged. For example, he said “to misspell words is very easy…to sound out words that you don’t know is a lot more difficult than if you’re not dyslexic” (interview 1, lines 178-179).

One of the children in particular did not experience any school environments that fostered his ability to learn to read or write. Parker had been in three different schools by the time he was in middle school. None of the schools had been able to give him the targeted intervention to address his learning difference. Because he had experienced such slow progress in learning any literacy skills, he developed a negative attitude toward learning and school. Parker said he did

not do his schoolwork half of the time and when he did do it, he just mostly guessed at the answers. His apathy and resentment toward reading and writing was reflective of a young man who experienced years of failure and had lost his motivation to persevere through the hardships of school. He didn't believe anyone at school really cared about him and said, "I don't really care if they do. I don't even like school to be honest" (Interview 1, line 229).

Making progress in school. For all the children that experienced school more positively, it was because they began to make progress as readers and writers. For example, Jeff said, "As I progressed, I just started feeling way better about school and everything else" (interview 1, line 78-79, 114). These children were able to feel more positively about school as their literacy skills improved over time.

Conclusion

Among these six children, prior to receiving intervention, none of them believed they were good readers or writers and believed others saw them as failures in their abilities to read and write. Those that received early intervention that addressed their phonological deficit were able to renegotiate how they felt about themselves as literate people and to experience school more positively as their skills increased. As these children experienced success in learning how to read and write, their feelings of anger subsided, school assignments became easier, and homework lessened.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate how children with dyslexia experience their learning difference. There were three specific research questions addressed in this study: What meanings do children with dyslexia construct for that learning difference? How do they see themselves as literate people? What is it like to experience school as a student with dyslexia? Two distinct time frames became important: before the children were diagnosed and received intervention and after they began intervention services, showing the importance of intervention to the participants' understandings of dyslexia, the shaping of their literate identity, and their experiences of school. In an unfolding of the dyslexia experience, I have described how the participants went from no understandings of dyslexia to creating individual meanings for this learning difference. Next, I discuss how the participant's literate identities were shaped and reshaped by the literacy practices of their classrooms. Then, I discuss the participant's positive and negative aspects of how school was experienced. Lastly, I discuss implications, limitations, and further research associated with this study.

Unfolding of the Dyslexia Experience

Research studies from the literature focused on early intervention as a means to improve reading abilities for at-risk students that showed signs of reading difficulties (Cavanaugh et al. 2000; Dion et al. 2010; Wanzek & Vaughn, 2004). In this study, early intervention was the key to making a difference in what the children understood about themselves as individuals with dyslexia. Across all of the research questions early intervention mattered. Early intervention mattered in how the participants understood dyslexia, their literate identity, and how school was experienced. Although each student's journey varied, those that received early intervention were able to make sense of their learning difference, become more engaged in performing the literacy

practices of their classroom communities, reshape their identities as readers and writers, and experience both positive and negative aspects of school. Conversely, students that did not receive early intervention continued to be challenged to learn the literacy practices required to become readers and writers of printed text. Their inability to perform the literary practices of their learning community negatively impacted their literate identity and how school was experienced.

Prior to receiving intervention, all of the participants experienced negative emotions about their inability to read and write in early schooling. Their frustration continued to mount as they progressed through the grades experiencing continued failure and feelings of being different from other members of their learning community. For the majority of the children that received intervention at the beginning of first and second grade, they began to feel more comfortable participating in classroom literacy activities. Although they continued to discuss their challenges with reading, writing, and spelling, they had a new sense of confidence as they engaged in the practices that they had not been able to perform prior to intervention. Their newfound success in performing their classroom literacy practices fostered positive changes in how they began to see themselves as literate people. The children discussed the strategies they learned from being in intervention that supported their abilities to engage in the reading and writing activities of their classroom. These results add to findings from Beach and Ward (2013) and Moses and Kelly (2017) who found that one's literate identity is constructed within social contexts and is shaped by how one perceives themselves as competent. Findings from this study showed when the children perceived themselves as having some level of competency to perform the literacy practices of their classrooms, they felt better about themselves as readers and writers, which makes a clear connection between perceptions of competency and literate identity.

For the children that did not receive early intervention or any intervention that addressed their reading and writing difficulties, they continued on a trajectory of failure and frustration.

They had negative perceptions of their abilities as readers and writers, which affected their motivation to engage in the practices that they were not able to learn or perform, which lead to shutting down and not wanting to go to school.

Engagement in classroom practices provides children a feeling of belonging. Engagement and participation in classroom learning reinforce children's positions as active members of their learning community, which is essential for learning to occur. Outcomes for the students that did not receive early intervention and did not feel competent to participate in classroom learning were consistent with McCarthey (2001) who found that students have a sense of who they are as readers and writers from how they perceive their literacy abilities in relation to their peers and classroom norms. Essential to the construction of children's literate identity is acceptance at any level of competence, so children feel membership in their learning community, as opposed to sitting on the outside looking in and questioning why they cannot learn in the same way their peers learn with such ease.

No Meaning to Making Meaning

The children in this study were not able to explain what their diagnosis of dyslexia meant or in what ways dyslexia affected how they learned before they received intervention. All of the children spoke of their diagnosis as confusing and meaningless, and were aware that their abilities to learn classroom literacy practices were different from their peers. In addition to feeling confused the children began to feel that they were incapable of learning. These findings indicate that children diagnosed with dyslexia need to understand the characteristics of dyslexia that affect aspects of literacy learning, so they don't perceive themselves as incapable of all learning. The children's confusion and frustration of why they struggled to learn made them feel different from their peers, which had negative effects on their identities as learners. These results are consistent with Raskind et al., (2006), who found that adolescents struggled to

understand their learning difference and had questions about why they were different from their community of peers. Heyman (1990) suggested discussions with children would clarify information about their learning difference, which would lead to improved self-esteem. Dyslexia is a social construct, which suggests that an individual identified with dyslexia deviates from what society has deemed "normal."

Results from this study, Raskin et al., (2006) and Ferri et al. (2005) all found that a lack of understanding regarding participants'' learning differences caused distress and anxiety due to the unknown. Raskind et al. (2006) found that the children expressed wanting reliable information to more fully understand their learning differences. Kenyon et al. (2013) indicated that many children who received a learning difference diagnosis in school resulted in traumatic experiences that continued into adulthood. These results magnify the importance of children understanding in what ways they may learn differently, so they understand that learning differently does not make them different as human beings.

After the children received intervention, they began to understand what dyslexia was, could articulate specific areas in which they struggled, and could draw connections to their challenges and the characteristics of dyslexia. The children articulated the literacy practices they believed were their strengths and discussed the literacy practices they perceived as their weaknesses. These results suggest that through intervention the children were able to become aware of their literacy strengths without focusing solely remediating their weaknesses. The children's realization of their literacy strengths fostered confidence and a sense of competency. If children come to understand dyslexia encompasses both literacy strengths and weaknesses, they will understand they learn differently, but not perceive themselves as different. Intervention as its main function can no longer be viewed as just academic support for children with dyslexia. Intervention should be viewed with a new purpose, which is to provide information and

understanding to children with dyslexia so they do not think their challenges are due to being "stupid" or incapable of learning.

Intervention As A Means of Reshaping Literate Identity

All of the children, prior to intervention, experienced negative feelings in all aspects of literate identity. They perceived themselves as not being competent readers and writers because they were not able to learn the literacy practices of their classroom. The children saw themselves as failures as they observed others in their classroom performing these practices with ease. They felt that their peers were aware of their literacy challenges, which made them feel different. Due to their inability to learn and participate in the literacy activities of their learning environment, these children never felt like they were members of their classroom community.

There were two children that did not receive early intervention. As a result, their literate identities remained negative across all aspects. They continued to perceive themselves as not being competent in the literacy practices of the classroom, made little progress, and compared themselves to their peers negatively. These two children were aware of what counted as literacy in their classroom. However, they did not perceive that they were able to engage and participate in those practices in their classrooms, so they never felt like they were members of their learning community. Thus, these two children did not reshape their negative literate identities. Similar to Beach and Ward (2013), literate identity is impacted when children do not see themselves matching to what counts in classroom literacy practices.

The children that began to receive intervention were able to reshape their negative literate identities to be more positive. Their positive feelings, however, were not uniform across all aspects of their literate identities. The literate identity profiles of each child varied. Once the children began intervention they began to feel as though they were making progress and feel more competent in the literacy practices of their classrooms. Two of the children felt positive

about their reading progress because they were able to read higher-level books than they had in the past, but felt their reading was not as good when compared to their peers. Two other children felt positive about their reading progress because it was becoming easier, but not easy. These two children perceived reading positively due to their progress, but did not see themselves as completely good readers due to reading still being difficult.

Therefore, how the children perceived their reading progress existed on a continuum that moved slightly or drastically from one end to the other and which continued to fluctuate across time. The children were in a state of active development; their perceptions of competence were in flux, further indicating the different aspects of their literate identities were fluid and malleable, consistent with Collins and Beach (2012).

As the children perceived they were making progress and feeling more positive about themselves as readers, the majority of them retained a more negative view of themselves as writers. Although two of children discussed that they enjoyed writing, they did not think that they were good writers due to bad spelling. One of the children perceived he was a good writer, but he was not as good of a writer compared to his peers because of his spelling. One explanation for this perception could be that they viewed spelling as a key component of the writing practices within their classroom settings, which they were not able to demonstrate well or with accuracy. The children's perceptions of what counted as good writing seemed to be built around the conventions that make writing correct such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization. They were not taking into account the value of composing as an important aspect of writing. These children may have felt more positive if they understood that ideas and creative expression was key to good writing, and conventions were only an element of writing.

Each of these children's literate identity profiles reflected different perceptions of themselves as readers and writers. Like the profiles in Collins & Beach (2012), there were multiple

combinations of how the children perceived the different aspects of their literate identities. The children perceived some aspects of their literate identity positively, some a little less positively, and other aspects more negatively, however, less negatively than before intervention. Like the children in Delgado-Brown's (2014) study, the different aspects that made up their literate identity fluctuated and moved on a continuum, which could be positively or negatively influenced by the practices and environments of school.

Part of literate identity is connected to feelings of membership within a community (Delgado-Brown, 2014). Prior to intervention the children perceived their membership to be the outside fringes looking into their community of practice. This role was tied to their perceptions of themselves as unable to engage and participate in the practices that counted as literacy within their classroom settings. Once the children were actively engaging in the literacy practices within their classroom communities their roles changed. They were no longer members on the fringes, but active participants alongside their peers. Once the children in this study received targeted intervention they began to understand and participate in the literacy practices that challenged their learning, which positively reshaped their perceptions of who they were as readers and writers, and drastically changed how they saw themselves.

Experiencing School

The children did not like going to school because of their feelings of failure they had being in school. The children felt confused about why they were unable to learn and felt miserable before they received intervention. They did not feel connected to their classroom community because they saw other members perform the practices they were not able to do, or engage in, which made them feel like they did not belong. Like the students in Furrer and Skinner (2003) they did not feel connected to the classroom and reported feelings of dissatisfaction with school.

Children's perception of teacher support was key to their positive or negative feelings about

school. If children perceive that teachers care and support them then they feel better about going to school. Conversely, if they do not perceive teachers as caring and supportive then children do not want to go to school. Like Erkan et al. (2018) who asserted that children's biggest impact of school is the teacher. Like the children in Goodenow and Grady (1993) study, when children perceive a teacher as supportive, they experience school more positively.

The children that had early intervention experienced school more positively, although they still experienced challenges in performing the literacy activities of their classrooms. The children perceived their abilities and who they were as literate people more optimistically, however, their literacy profiles were mixed. They felt better about themselves as they participated in the classroom literacy activities that they were unable to do prior to intervention. They were now able to engage with their peers in a manner that made them feel connected to their community, and not perceive themselves as failures on the fringes of their classrooms looking in. Like the children in Furrer and Skinner (2003) their perceptions of connectedness was an influential factor in experiencing school positively. According to Osterman (2000) a student's feeling of connectedness to school is through their interactions with peers that provide a sense of belonging and school liking.

In spite of the fact that they were able to participate with success alongside their peers, they still found the activities difficult. The children's abilities to perform the foundational practices of decoding for reading, and spelling for writing, to be able to actively participate in classroom practices, required much more effort and focus than that of their peers. By receiving additional support through intervention, the children were able to reframe their perspective of school from a place of negativity and frustration to a place where learning and wellbeing occurred.

Implications for Practice

This study offers insights into the lives of children with dyslexia grounded in lived

experiences that has the potential to transform both the thinking around dyslexia and the literacy practices that are conducted in classrooms. Children identified with dyslexia understood their learning difference as well as how that shaped them as literate people in school settings.

Because this study demonstrated the importance of early intervention, a critical component of school policy for children with dyslexia is screening for reading difficulties as early as Pre-Kindergarten. Fortunately, the process of becoming a skilled reader is well mapped out. There are discrete and discernible accomplishments, which can be seen and monitored to determine if children are on a trajectory for reading success. These guidelines are general, but there is a developmental sequence of timing that aligns with specific reading skills to affirm children are on course or if a red flag should be raised. Screening and progress monitoring in Pre-kindergarten and as children move into kindergarten puts children on a radar for how they are progressing. Intervention for decoding and encoding are essential for all struggling readers, however, for children with dyslexia, the pacing, intensity, and duration of time within intervention settings may not be appropriate for all readers that struggle and have reading difficulties.

This study also sheds light on the importance of expanding the borders of classroom literacy practices by using other types of social practices for meaning making, such as multimodal text. Children with dyslexia often have difficulties coming up with the right words to communicate their meaning. Reading and creating multimodal texts provides children with additional ways to communicate that do not rely solely on traditional print-based texts. Multimodal texts could be pictures, picture books, graphics, dance, or posters to effectively respond to or compose meaning. The use of a keyboard, speech to text applications, audible books, and online spell-check are tools and resources that could also support these children. These alternate ways of making and showing meaning allow all children to participate alongside their peers as members

of their classroom community, which promotes connectedness and a sense of belonging.

Limitations and Future Research

One of the limitations of the study is how the participants were chosen. The participants were chosen from a list supplied by the President of Decoding Dyslexia, a dyslexia advocacy group. In this group, parents are heavily involved in understanding and implementing supports for their children and others with dyslexia. It is not known from this study if having parents that are knowledgeable about dyslexia and proactive in the supports and policies skewed the children's perceptions of their experiences. Future studies could adjust for this limitation by having schools or districts suggest a sample of participants from a variety of grade levels diagnosed with dyslexia, to provide additional insights from both younger and older students.

The number of participants for this study was only six children. A study with a higher number of participants could provide additional insights into the factors that promote or hinder literate identity and how school is experienced.

This study also leads to additional questions to be answered by future research, such as exploring early intervention as a multi-dimensional construct. One common dimension of early intervention is instruction as a means to target children's abilities and areas of need so they are able to progress in learning. Research that leads to an understanding of what aspects of early intervention helped to reshape the perspectives of the children in this study would be useful.

The present study is a retrospective view of how children experienced their lives before and after receiving intervention. Future studies should include their children's perceptions and experiences as they are making their journey would yield important information in what children feel as successes or frustrations and why they felt that way in real time.

A longitudinal study of kindergarten and first grade students who have dyslexia or strong characteristics of dyslexia could be explored to find out what aspects of early intervention

influenced their experiences in how they perceive themselves as literate people over time, and how school was experienced. This study was a retrospective study of a snapshot in time. A longitudinal study would follow children in real time from when they begin to struggle through the changes and experiences that occur through intervention.

This study looked only at children who had been identified with dyslexia. An additional study could explore early intervention for children identified with dyslexia compared to struggling readers that have not been identified with dyslexia, to see if there are real differences in their experiences. Results from this study could glean how if any of their experiences are different, and what can be learned from those findings to support screening, identification, and intervention services for all struggling readers to promote their learning and experiences of school.

The present study is a retrospective view of how children experienced their lives before and after receiving intervention. Future studies should include their children's perceptions and experiences as they are making their journey would yield important information in what children feel as successes or frustrations and why they felt that way in real time.

Conclusion

Dyslexia is often called the hidden learning difference. Children with dyslexia often are unaware that they have a learning difficulty. This study helped to illuminate how children identified with dyslexia understand dyslexia, their perceptions of themselves as readers and writers, and their experiences of school. Those children identified with dyslexia that had early intervention, began to understand their learning difference, embraced "their superpower", and developed more positive literate identity in school experienced school much more positively. This study has provided insights for policy and practice for children with dyslexia, which provides a voice for a population that often goes unrecognized and misunderstood.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Student Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Session 1)

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this study. Before we begin, I'm going to check the audio-recording. I also want to make sure we use the pseudonym you chose. I have_____as your pseudonym, or made up name that we will use beginning now and throughout the study. I'm conducting this study to have a better understanding of dyslexia and the experiences of children with dyslexia.

Tell me something about yourself as a reader and writer.

So, how does having dyslexia fit in?

Tell me about the process of being identified as having dyslexia?

Once you knew you had dyslexia, how did you make sense of it?
Possible Probe: How did it make you feel?

Was this different than before you knew?
Possible Probe: Tell me more about that.

What was it like for you when you were learning to read and write before you knew you had dyslexia?

Is it different for you now that you know you have dyslexia?
Possible Probe: How? or Why not?

What would you like to tell others about what it is like to have dyslexia?
Possible Probe: What would you like to tell your friends/classmates/teachers?

What kind of reader do you think you are at school?
Possible Probe: Why do you think that?

What kind of reader do you think you are at home?
Possible Probe: Why?

Do you like to read now?
Possible Probe: Why or why not?
Possible Probe: Do you read on the Internet or at home…tell me about that.

What kind of writer do you think you are at school?

Possible Probe: Why do you think that?

Do you do some writing outside of school?
Possible Probe: Do you do any writing at home?
Possible Probe: What kind of stuff do you write?

Describe yourself as a member of your class.
Possible Probe: For instance, some kids see themselves as the funny one, the quiet one, the artistic one, the teacher helper… how do you see yourself?

Appendix B

Student Semi-Structured Interview Questions (Session 2)

Thank you again for agreeing to take part in this study and for meeting with me for our second interview.

I asked you to bring to this interview two items to share with me that express how you felt before and after you were identified with dyslexia.

1. *Tell me about the item you chose to express what you felt before you were identified with dyslexia.*

2. *Now, please tell me about the 2nd item, the one you chose to express how you felt after you were identified with dyslexia?*

Thank you so much for talking with me today and sharing so much of yourself and your experiences so I can better understand dyslexia to complete my study. Is there anything else you would like to add to our interview today? I can't thank you enough for sharing your personal journey with me.

Appendix C

Signed Parental Permission to Participate in Research

Will you allow your child to be involved in research at the University of Oklahoma?
I am Barbara Bayless from the Instructional Leadership and Academic Curriculum Department and I invite your child to participate in my research project entitled Exploring the Experience of Children with Dyslexia. This research is being conducted through the Norman Campus of the University of Oklahoma. Your child was selected as a possible participant because they have been identified as having dyslexia and attend school in grades 4-8.

Please read this document and contact me to ask any questions that you may have BEFORE allowing your child to participate in my research.

What is the purpose of this research? The purpose of this research is to gain insight in how children identified as dyslexic construct meaning from their specific learning difference and the factors that affect the development of their literate identity within school environments.

How many participants will be in this research? No more than 15 research participants will participate in this study that are between the 4^{th} and 8^{th} grades.

What will my child be asked to do? If you allow your child to be in this research, I will first ask them if they want to participate. If they agree, he/she will meet with me so I can conduct 2 one-on-one interviews. In the first interview I will be asking questions about their understanding of dyslexia, when and how they felt when they found out they had dyslexia, questions about how they experience school, with particular focus on how they see themselves as readers and writers. The second interview will be a time where your child will share with me two items of their choosing that represent how they felt before and after finding out they had dyslexia. These items could be a picture they drew, a song, a book, objects from your house, or something they have written, or anything else they choose.

How long will this take? Your child will participate in 2 one-on-one interviews with me. Each interview will last approximately 60 minutes and no more than 90 minutes, over a course of 3 weeks.

What are the risks and/or benefits if my child participates? There are no risks for your child to participate in this research. The benefit of having your child participate in this study may help other children with dyslexia to hear stories of those that share the same commonalities. This study will also broaden the knowledge of educators, parents, and policy makers, in understanding how children understand and experience dyslexia.

Will my child be compensated for participating? You child will not be reimbursed for her/his time and participation in this research.

Who will see my child's information? In research reports, there will be no information that will make it possible to identify your child. Research records will be stored securely and only approved researchers and the OU Institutional Review Board will have access to the records.

Does my child have to participate? No. If your child does not participate she/he will not be penalized or lose benefits or services unrelated to the research. If your child does participate, she/he doesn't have to answer any question and can stop participating at any time.

Will my child's identity be anonymous or confidential? Your child's name will not be retained or linked with her/his responses. All data will be coded using pseudonyms. All data will be stored in a locked file cabinet and a password-protected computer file.

What will happen to my child's data in the future? We will not share your data or use it in future research projects. All data will be kept a minimum of 5 years before being destroyed.

Who do I contact with questions, concerns, or complaints? If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research or have experienced a research-related injury, contact me at 405-213-5302, or barbara.l.bayless-1@ou.edu. You may also contact Dr. Sara Beach, the faculty sponsor for this research study at sbeach@ou.edu.

You can also contact the University of Oklahoma—Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at 405-325-8110 or irb@ou.edu. If you have questions about your child's rights as a research participant, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the researcher or if you cannot reach the researcher.

You will be given a copy of this document for your records.

Appendix D

Signed Child Assent (7-11 years)

Why are we meeting you?
I am Barbara Bayless from the University of Oklahoma. I am doing a research project to learn more about children who have dyslexia to better understand how they understand what dyslexia is and to describe what school is like, especially in reading and writing. I am asking you to help because I want to learn from you. In the whole research project, there will be no more than 15 children who also have dyslexia that will share their stories.

Your parent or guardian gave their permission for you to help me. I have told them about what I am asking you to do, and they said it was ok for you to work with me. The choice is up to you, though.

What will happen to you if you are in this research project?
If you agree to be in this research project, I am going to ask you questions when we meet for our first interview session. These questions will ask you about dyslexia, what school is like, and how you feel about reading and writing. On our second interview I will ask you to bring two items of your choice that you think represent how you felt before and after finding out you have dyslexia. The items could be a picture you drew, a song, a book, objects from your house, something you have written, or anything else you choose.

How long will you be in the research project?
You will be in the research project for two separate sessions. Each session will last about one hour and no more than 90 minutes. These sessions can be at your house or at the library, or somewhere where we talk without other people listening.

What good things might happen to you if you are in the research project?
You might feel good sharing your story about having dyslexia knowing you are helping people to better understand dyslexia and what it is like for you in school, especially with reading and writing.

What other things might happen to you if you are in the research project?
The questions may take a long time to answer.

Do you have to be in this research project?
No, you don't. No one will be mad at you if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to do this, just tell me. If you do want to be in the research project, tell me that. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

Will anybody know what I say?
You will pick a pseudonym, which is a made-up name that we will use from the beginning to the end of this study for anything you say or give me.

Do you have any questions?
You can ask questions now or at any time. You can talk to me or you can talk to someone else. If you sign this paper, it means that you understand what this letter says and want to be in the research project. I will also give you a copy of this form to keep. If you don't want to be in the

research project, don't sign this paper. Being in the research project is up to you, and no one will be upset if you don't sign this paper of if you change your mind later.

Child's Name_____

I agree to be in this study: _____yes_____no

Signature of Child	Date
Signature of Person Conducting Assent Discussion	Date
Name of Person Conducting Assent Discussion (print)	Date

Appendix E

Transcriber Confidentiality Memorandum of Understanding

Exploring the Experience of Children with Dyslexia

A. I, the principal investigator named below, represent that:

1. I have received IRB approval for the study named above.
2. I will not provide any Protected Health Information to be transcribed.

B. I, the transcriber named below, agree to transcribe data for this study for the principal investigator signing below. In this capacity, I agree that I will:

1. Keep all research information shared with me confidential and will not discuss or share the information in any form or format (e.g., disks, tapes, transcripts, "Research Information", with anyone other than, the principal investigator;
2. Keep all Research Information secure while it is in my possession. This includes but not limited to:
    - Using closed headphones when transcribing audio-taped interviews;
    - Keeping all transcript documents and digitized interviews in computer password-protected files;
    - Closing any transcription programs and documents when temporarily away from the computer;
    - Not taking the Research Information outside of the approved site;
    - Keeping any printed transcripts in a secure location such as a locked file cabinet;
    - Permanently deleting any digital or e-mail communication containing the Research Information and shredding any paper copies; and
    - Immediately notifying the principal investigator named below in the event the Research Information has been lost, stolen, or compromised (such as by hacked or ransomed files).
3. Return all Research Information to the principal investigator when I have completed the transcription tasks;
4. Erase or destroy all Research Information that is not returnable to the principal investigator (e.g., information stored on a computer hard drive) upon completion of the transcription tasks.

_____ _____

Signature of Transcriber Date

_____ _____

Signature of University Principal Investigator Date

Copy to be maintained for 6 years

Appendix F

Demographic Information and Self-Reflection Sheet

Directions: Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. Your answers will not be shared with anyone else.

Name_____**Date**_____

Birthdate_____**Your Age**_____years old

Your Gender_____Female_____Male

Your Ethnicity
(x one of the boxes below)

☐African-American ☐Asian-American ☐Caucasian ☐Hispanic ☐Native American
☐Other

For this study you will choose a pseudonym that we will use during the course of this study. A pseudonym is a name that you choose to be called that is not your own given name. We will use a pseudonym to protect anyone from knowing who you are. Please give what pseudonym you would like to choose:

_____

Self-Reflection Item
Please describe yourself as a reader and writer in written form or by drawing a picture below. If you would like to do both, please feel free to do both. You choose.

Appendix G

Assent Script

Hi, my name is Barbara. If you have any questions about what I'm telling you, you can ask me at any time.

I want to tell you about a research study I am doing. In my research study, I want to find out how kids like you understand what dyslexia is, how you feel about reading and writing and what school is like for you. You are being asked to be in this study because you are between 4th and 8th grade and have been identified as having dyslexia.

You do not have to be in this study. It is totally up to you. You can say yes now and change your mind later. All you have to do is tell me. No one will be mad at you if you change your mind.

No one will know what you said in this study when they read it. You will choose a pseudonym, which is a made-up name that I will use on anything you say or give me. If you decide to participate in the study, one of the first things you will do is choose your made-up name and from then on, I will use that name throughout the study and whenever we meet and talk.

Your parent or guardian said it is okay for you to be in this study. If you have questions for me or for your parent or guardian you can ask them now or later.

Do you understand what I am saying and explaining about the study? Do you have any questions about the study or what you are going to do to be part of this study?

Are you willing to share what dyslexia is like for you and how you feel about reading, writing, and school?

End of verbal script.

Appendix H

CODE BOOK
CATEGORIES FROM CODING

RESEARCH QUESTION #1
WHAT MEANINGS DO CHILDREN WITH DYSLEXIA CONSTRUCT FOR THAT LEARNING DIFFERENCE?

CATEGORY	SUBCATEGORY	Definition	CODE	Participant Quote	Frequency
	No Understanding of the Meaning of Dyslexia When Initially Told or Diagnosed	No understanding or confusion for the label of dyslexia.			
			No Meaning	R (5) "I didn't really understand what it meant." J (4) "I didn't really understand what it was at first." I: Do you remember your parents telling you? A (3) "Not really." I: Did you feel any better or worse knowing (you were dyslexic)? A (7) "Not at the time." I: Did you understand what it meant? P (5) "No." R (9) "I was like what does it kind of mean?" " I didn't really know what it meant yet."	11

				A: (1) “I didn’t really know what it was so I didn’t really care.” (Identified in 1st grade) “I thought I just had to read more.”	
			Confusion	R (2) “I was kind of confused like when I found out that I had it.” B (3) “It was confusing cause I didn’t understand what dyslexia was. I’d never heard of it.” R (5) “I didn’t really understand yet-so what does it matter that I’m dyslexic?” R (6) “I just kind of moved along.” (Once he was told) J (1): I didn’t know what was happening. I was confused.”	5
	The Meaning of Dyslexia After Living with It	Overall view of how children define and understand dyslexia, explaining their			

		negative, positive, and feelings of empowerment in regard to the label of dyslexia.			
			Defining Dyslexia	R (8) “It means to me like it’s difficult for you to read and write and it takes a lot longer to like spell out a word.” J (4) “But now I know that it’s like you can have trouble writing, you can have trouble spelling, you could have trouble reading.” “It’s mostly reading, and then, so now I understand it more than when I started.” J (7) “It can be very difficult sometimes or it can be very easy, or not very easy, it can be easier than if you were having, like it could start off very hard but if you get therapy or something like that, it could be easier for you, it could start to become easier.” B (2) “I see it (dyslexia) as someone normal just having trouble with reading and writing.” B (11) “We’re not really	5

				different, we just have more struggles, we just learn differently than other people do." "It's not just about reading and writing, it's a bunch of different things. Like you could have trouble with speaking in groups, you could have trouble reading out loud, you can like reading not math, love math and not reading."	
			Positive Feeling	J (4) "It made me feel better to know why I was having trouble." J (5) "I felt better than when I, like when I didn't know. I felt better after." C (4) "I felt good. My mom told me a lot about it cause I never really knew it." "We went to the Capitol and this person was talking to us about it. I had a number one hand, and then like I love dyslexia." "It feels good when they talk about it. So, like it's me." C (4) "It's good having finally gotten a diagnosis and knowing what it is. I'm not dumb, I'm smart." C (5) "I was happy." (knowing it was dyslexia) C (10) "I still like struggle	7

				today, and don't know for how many years, but it helps." (helps to know what it is). I: Did you feel any better or worse knowing (you were dyslexic)? A (7) "Uh, yes." (now, not then)	
			Negative Feelings	I: Did you feel relief knowing your challenges were due to dyslexia? P: "No." I: What would you tell others about what it's like to have dyslexia? P: (8) "I probably wouldn't say anything." A (15) "It's kind of hard. Terrible." R (5) "… it gives you a hard time to read and write." B: (3) "It's hard and confusing and that some people have different troubles with it."	4
			Positive Identity	R (4) "I was like thinking in my head, I was like that's kind of like my super power now." "Cause not everybody has it, so." R (8) "…but, and it (dyslexia) also means to me like a super power too." R (10) "I was like well they (super heroes) have all the	4

				super power so why can't dyslexia be my super power because not everybody has it." C (9) "You will make it through it."	

CATEGORIES FROM CODING
RESEARCH QUESTION #2

HOW DO THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS LITERATE PEOPLE?

LAYER 1: BEFORE INTERVENTION			
Subcategory	**Definition**		
Feelings Around Literate Identity Before Receiving Intervention	Feelings that affect the participant's ability to execute the literary skills that they perceive as valued by their community.		
		Embarrassed	R (7) "Sometimes I would pretend, like my finger like following along with the words and I would just be looking at the picture."
		Negative Feelings	R(1): "From the beginning I've felt like a five." A (1) "Terrible. Because I'm bad." P (1) "Mad, sad, and frustrated that I couldn't do anything like whatever else kid I didn't know why." R: (1) "Reading is hard and it's rough." J (1): "I was sad. I was all like spread apart."
		Different	B (4) "It made me feel different, and I don't know, it changed how I felt about myself a little bit when I was little." "Thinking I can't read, I don't know how to spell correctly like other people do." A (1): "I don't like being different from everyone."

		Dumb	C (3) “I always knew there was something wrong with me. I saw someone else grab a big book and I was at the little books. I never understood what that was. Like, I thought I was dumb.”
		Confused	B (1) “I was confused and more shy to speak out that I needed help.”
Factors that Contribute to A Negative Literate Identity	Factors that affect children’s literate identity in negative ways.		
		Struggle Frustration	R (6) “…I would be choppy so I’d read a word and look at the next word and have to like spell the first word, the first letters, the word.” “I couldn’t always sound out the letters.” R (7) In first grade “I was still choppy. So, I would read like two word and then get caught, and then read the next three words, and then get caught, and then get to the sentence, the end of the sentence and then get caught and I would have to put my finger and follow it down to the next sentence.” C: (2) “It’s hard not knowing the words. I can know it, I’ll be like I don’t know this one cause I forgot it.” “I’ll just skip it because I don’t know it.” C (5) “It’s hard for me to comprehend stuff and remember.” “Like I studied and like why is this not sticking in my brain.” R (6) “I would just look through the book at pictures.” R (7) “Sometimes I would like read the word and it

			wouldn't like make sense and then I would kind of look at the pictures and flip to the next page." C (6) "I passed my third grade test, and then when I was going into fourth grade, I still couldn't read." C (7) I know a lot of words, like basic words. And then I don't sound out words. I just memorize them I guess." R (2) "…it was pulling me down." A (7) "I was like, why can't I read that?" P (1) "I don't like to read so, I'm not a good reader." I: On a scale of 1-10 where would do you see yourself? P (2) One A (1) "I can't do it." "Words. Everything." A (8) "I would mostly guess and then that's mostly it." R (7) "I would just like pick up a book and say why am I doing this, I can't read it." C (2) "I'll go to the teacher like what's this word?" "If I'm reading with my mom, I'll ask her. I usually like make "uuh", and then they tell me." A (7) "It's kind of like mad. You had to read only these books. " C (6) "I passed my third grade test, and then when I was going into fourth grade, I still couldn't read." P (2) "I'm not good at it." I: If somebody reads the passage to you, do you generally understand what it's saying? A (16) "Yeah." J (6) "At school we would just do like write a sentence about how your day was the day before or something…not easy." "The spelling and then trying to get what I was thinking on to the paper." A (2) "Just thinking and then going, what did I say?" A (2) "I choose (the words) carefully." A (15) "It's hard to read the passage and then …write a

			paragraph in your own words." I: What would make it better? A (15) "If I didn't have to do it." R (9) "I just felt it was kind of a disadvantage because it would take me longer to write a sentence or read or spell." R (5) …like clogging up and thinking of a sentence…it's better when I talk." J (6) "At school we would just do like write a sentence about how your day was the day before or something…not easy." "The spelling and then trying to get what I was thinking on to the paper." A (2) "Just thinking and then going, what did I say?" A (2) "I choose (the words) carefully." A (15) "It's hard to read the passage and then …write a paragraph in your own words." I: What would make it better? A (15) "If I didn't have to do it." A (6) "I just went with it." (another student reading/giving answers to her)
Outcomes that Contribute to A Negative Literate Identity	Outcomes that occurred due to having a negative literate identity.		
		Shut-Down	R (2) "…I shut down a lot because of having to read, like write, so then I would just shut down." "…like not being able to think." R (2) (regarding shutting down) "Definitely kindergarten into first grade…writing…sentences." I: How did you feel in kindergarten? P (5) "I didn't really care."

			I: Do you remember feeling that way in first grade? P: (5) Mm…hmm. R (16) "I came home that day and asked mom can you homeschool me." "I just, I couldn't flip a page." J (3) "I didn't want to go to school."
		Avoidance	I: What would you do when you couldn't read the book? B (6)"I would usually do something to get it off my mind, like draw" I: Did you ever have to read in class? B (8) "I would usually ask to get to the restroom or the office."
Participant Feelings Due to Their Perceptions of What Others Think of Them Before Receiving Intervention	Feelings that the participants feel due to their perceptions of what others think of them prior to receiving intervention		
		Embarrassment Frustration	C (1) "I would have to read out of the little section, like baby books I guess. That was hard for me because I saw some kids in my grade read bigger books and I like to read bigger books." C (11) "….he's like what kind of books do you read? I'm like none of your business cause you don't know what I've gone through –so much that you haven't cause you're faster than me." R (16) "I would just be like getting really frustrated in school cause I wouldn't be able to read, and I'd look at the other kids and they'd just be reading a sentence like completely reading it and flip the page and I wouldn't be able to flip the first page."

		Being Judged	B (13) “People are staring at me. I don’t know. Some people can be judgey, even though they have dyslexia they’ll judge you.” B (7) “I didn’t like talking about it with other people.” “Cause I was scared someone would judge me.”
		Treated Differently	B (7) “I had friends who would judge me and treat me differently.” B (8) “Some of my friends knew what grades I got and they treated me differently.”
Subcategory	**Definition**		
Layer 2: After Intervention	Definition	Code	**Participant Quotes**
Feelings Around Literate Identity During Intervention	Feelings that affect the participant’s ability to execute the literary skills that they perceive as valued by their community.		
		Proud	C (6) “Things are a lot, a lot better.” Because I actually have something that I’m like proud of. I’m dyslexic and it means I have a learning disability and I process on the other side of my brain. And before then, I’d be like I’m dumb. I don’t know.”
		Smart	C (7) “I feel smart, that’s like always a big thing when you know you feel smart.”
		Positive Feelings	B (2) “I’m not as confused and I don’t get bullied anymore.” “I’m not as confused and I’m more happy and not shy.”

			P: (1) "I'm happy. I know like why I'm like what's made me not understand everything and now it makes me feel all better and so I can accomplish more things." R (1): Reading isn't hard anymore—it's like my brain is soft and stretchy." J: (1): (After intervention) "I felt like all put together." B: (4) "I'm more of a happy person now. The friends that I have and that I have a family that is helping me."
		Negative Feelings	I: So, what kind of reader do you think you are at school? A (17) "Not that great."
Factors that Contribute to Negative Literate Identity During Intervention.	Factors that affect children's literate identity in negative ways during intervention.		
		Struggle Hard	R (10) "Sometimes I'm reading…I just know what it means, sometimes, I had to go through it and read every sentence to try and find the words. So, then it took me another 10 minutes to go through and find it." I: Has reading gotten since you've done intervention? P (2) "No." J (1) "It's still hard for me to read." C (2) "It's hard to read, it struggles." "You struggle with it cause we process with the other side of our brain, so that's where other stuff takes place." I: Is writing easier than reading, or is it harder? P (6) "It's about the same." I: Is it the words that are hard or understanding what the words mean? P (3) "Understanding."

			R (2) "…it was pulling me down, and then I got back up." I: How do you ever show what you know? P: (6) "Just don't do it half the time. Half the time I just guess." R (10) "I just took too long." "I was really tired by then." R (3) "It's not like freestyle writing assignments or something. And it's like, it, when it's not like that it's, yeah that's when it gets harder." B (2) "It's hard. It's harder than reading." B (2) "Trying to sound it out, punctuation and spelling." A (18) "If you want to write something, we don't have extra time to write stuff and if you want to write a story, like we're writing a story in class, we have to turn it in. I'm like all these words are messed up. Here you go." I: Is it the spelling of the words that make it hard? P (3) He nods yes… I: Is it hard to put your thoughts on paper? P (3) "It's both." R (8) "I was kinda glad that I stopped (writing) but also kind of like didn't want to because I wanted to get finished. I like to get stuff finished before it's due, but sometimes I can't do that because it's a big assignment." A (18) "Right after I know what it says, but after a while I don't know what this is." "I like misspell words and then I go, what is that word?" I: How is writing at school? Like completing a worksheet? P (3) "I just guess." B (7) "I would try, but it wouldn't turn out correctly."
		Tired	R (3) "It's like it gets sometimes in the way of thinking cause you get tired of thinking, and then you're like tired and ready to take a break and you still have to think. And then it just makes it hard to write when you finally think

			of something." R (8) (3rd grade) "So, we had to do a paragraph about what you want to be when you're older, and I wrote two sentences and I had to stop, and then the next day I wrote one sentence, and then I turned it in and said I'm finished." "I just got way too tired."
Outcomes that Contribute to Negative Literate Identity During Intervention	Outcomes that occur during intervention that contribute to a negative literate identity		
		Don't Enjoy Reading and Writing	C (12) "I don't read a lot in my house, like school, you know, you have to get your AR points in." "I just don't like read a lot." "If I'm almost done with a book I'll just go ahead and finish it." I: Do you like to read now? A (17) "Not really." P (1) "I don't like it (reading)." I: Do you write much at home? B (14) "No." I: Do you do any writing at home? P: (13) "No." C: (13) "I don't want to write a whole paragraph. That's like not me." "Like coming up with the ideas and stuff." "It is not fun."
		Defiance	I: If you were going to write a paragraph about something that you wanted to write about or you had interest in what would that be like? P (3) "I wouldn't write it."

			I: How do you feel if you have to write something? P (6) "I wouldn't do it."
Factors that Contribute to Positive Literate Identity During Intervention	Factors that led to a positive literate identity during intervention		
		Support	B (9) "I get the kind of help I need (at Trinity). R (5) "I never thought I would be there cause it's like a secondary school that helped me understand." (Read/Write Center) R (11) Different reader at home than at school "Yeah, because I can get audio books here instead of like not being able to get as many audio books at school, only a few."
		Safe Place to Learn	J (3) "But when I went to therapy, it was so much easier for me because it was a safe place." (mid 2nd entered therapy)
Outcomes that Contribute to Positive Literate Identity During Intervention	Outcomes that led to a positive literate identity during intervention.		
		Likes Reading	R (1) "Going into like a whole different world of imagination." C (1) "Now I get to read the big books, so that's fun." B (10) "I feel pretty good because I can read chapter books more and I like to read now."
		Less Struggle Learning in a	R (15) "Yeah, like it's real, it's getting easier to read a sentence or read a paragraph cause I'm reading a book in Read/Write now and it's getting easy, easier, not easy, easier."

		different way Fluent Bigger Books	P: Why is it easier? R (15) "Just learning all the combinations and learning in different ways." "I'm learning like combinations and like, like coding the word. I will be able to look at a word and code it in my head and just know the word." B (15) "It helped (Read/Write Center). And then I went to Trinity and that helped me a bunch." R (10) "I've gotten more fluent at reading." "Like when my mom reads to me, then I understand the story, or when somebody reads it to me and then I have to like write like the clue words or something like that, it helps because then I heard it in the sentence and I'm like oh I know where that is." C (7) "I can read big books." R (1) "I feel like a seven now because I've improved a lot at reading." R (1) "Like being able to read bigger words, longer sentences, and being able to like express like, able to express the sentence better." R (6) "It improved in like a month." (reading) R (8) "When I got into third grade it (writing) was easier because I was rather into it." "Then it was like making sense, and my first paragraph that I did was in second grade." R (12) "I feel like I can come up with really good sentences, cause I wrote one time that I wrote about like the story, it was kind of like the gingerbread man, but it was about a stolen TV or something like that, and it had humor in it, too. So, I like to make funny stuff." A (18) "Sometimes I like to write short stories. I like writing." "Just random stuff." "I grab a piece of paper and start writing."
Positive Literate	Outcomes that		

Identity With A Caveat (During /After Intervention)	contribute to a positive reading identity, but with exceptions		
		Good, but not the best	R (1) "Okay at reading, but not the best." "Like a seven." R(4) "It gives its up and downs." R (10) "But when I'm graded on like a reading test, I kind of like, mmm…is it there or I don't know."
		Better, but Shakey Good, but with exceptions	R (3) "It got better but it was still a little bit like walking the boat." (In first grade after intervention began) I: Do you think of yourself as a good reader? B (1) "Sometimes." I: How do you see yourself as a reader at home? A (17) "Pretty good I guess." I: What do you think is a good reader? B (1) "I'm not sure…when someone can read it clearly and not mess up the words a bunch." I: How do you think you do with that? B (1) "Okay, I guess." C (3) "Grammar I think is good. Spelling is bad. "Cause I don't know how to spell a lot of stuff." "I put grandma, and I spelt it wrong. I was like oh my God, I don't know how to spell grandma." A (2) "I do good at thinking and writing it, but I don't spell it correctly." R (9) "I would talk about my story…so I can talk it out now. So, it was like my super power." "I would whisper to myself what I was going to write." P: Does that make you feel better and more confident? R (9) "Yeah." C (13) "If you give me like make your own topic, it would be about dyslexia."

		Good, but resentful toward Intervention	I: Do you feel like the Barton Program (the intervention) has made a difference (in reading)? P: It has, but I don't like it." I: Do you feel like you've made progress? P (6) "mm, hmm. I: Do you feel like you would have made that amount of progress on your own? P (6) "I feel like I did it on my own."
Participant Feelings Due to Their Perceptions of What Others Think of Them During Intervention	What the participants feel due to their perceptions of what others think of them during intervention		
		Shame Embarrassment	I: Do your friends know you are dyslexic? I: Do your friends know you are dyslexic? A (20) "Like half of them do. The other half don't." I: "Why don't they know?" A: (20) "I just don't have time. We're chatting it up and they're not in a lot of my classes so they're like…" I: Would you want to be like that? (openly tell others?) A (22) "Someday. I'm not good with that." A (21) "There is this guy at school that is really popular…he doesn't know how to read and he's dyslexic and he just tells random people and we're like, okay…he doesn't really care." C (6) "Sophie, my best friend reads the book, like she'll read it, I was like that happens?" " "…she's like oh, yes, this, this, this…". B (12) "I can read better at home than at school. Sometimes I don't feel pressured when other people

			aren't around me."
		Lack of Understanding	A: (21) "At a sleepover I told like two of them and one was like really shocked and the other was like, okay. She doesn't know what it is." "I just said I was dyslexic and moved on." I: Do the people in your class know you are dyslexic? P: (8) They know. I: Do you think they understand what it is? P: (9) "No."
		Wanting to Be Accepted	B (9) "I have friends that have dyslexia like me and understand." (Trinity). "Most of them are dyslexic." "it makes me feel happy that I'm not alone and people know what I'm going through." I: Do you feel people would treat you differently (judge you) now? B (7) "No." I: What is different for you now that you know you have dyslexia? B (9) "I feel okay. Being different is fine." B (2) "I have friends that understand what it's like to have dyslexia."
Outcomes of Literate Identity That Continue After Completing Intervention (Outlier: Jeff)	Outcomes of Literate Identity that continue after intervention is completed.		
		Lack of Desire to read and	I: Do you do much writing outside of school? J (10) "No, I only write, when I write it's for like a test."

		write	J (8) “I don’t really read like I’m not a big reader in general, but occasionally pick up a book at school just to read it if I don’t have anything else to do.” J (9) “I like reading comic books occasionally.” J (9) “I’ll occasionally pick up a random book and start reading it, then if I don’t like it just put it away.”
		Continual Struggle	J (2) “It hard for me to put my thoughts onto paper. So, I’d much rather write, or like type it out or like use an iPad or my phone.” J (1) “Like I can (read), I just get so tired.” J (8) “You have to sound out words that you don’t know a lot more than if you’re not dyslexic.” J (3) “When I’m writing like shorter sentences it’s easier, but when I have to write paragraphs, it gets harder after every paragraph.”
		Positive but with a caveat	J (1) “I think I’m a good reader, but I don’t trust myself.” J (1) “I read quickly. I can read, I can read fluently. I will occasionally miss words but I won’t always miss word.” J (8) “…like a sentence that’s in there and it has words that I understand but don’t fully understand.” J (2) “I can write decently well. I will occasionally, like words that I don’t know how to write, I’ll try to sound them out but I might not write them perfectly every time.” J (8) “I think I’m a good reader, but not a great reader.” J (12) And it’s easier now that I’m in middle school because I finish, cause some assignments are easier than others like to finish.” I: Do you find yourself not writing some words because you know you’re going to have a challenge spelling them? J (3) “Yes.” J (3) “I don’t think it (dyslexia) really affects me that

			much, it's just my brain telling, tells me what words, but I just can't get them out on the paper. Or like I can't spell it or whatever. So, it will occasionally affect me, but it won't always affect me." I: Do you consider yourself a good writer? J (10) "Yes, I can write sentences quickly if I can think, if I can tell my hand to write the words that I want written, or I might not be able to get the entire sentence written out but I'll get most of it, and then I'll put my pencil down and sit and think for a little bit, and then just keep writing." J (10) "I don't really know why I think I'm a good writer. It's maybe because I can write a certain amount of words in a certain amount of time or something like that."
		Fosters Perseverance	J (1) "It made me realize that I will have troubles reading, even after therapy. But I just keep trying to get better." J (7) " I try to take my time now. Like reading sentences, going back and reading them, sounding out words that I don't know, like what it was." "I don't like doing it as much, but it helps me like cause then I know what the word is and then I can use it whenever."
Participant Feelings Due to Participants' Perceptions of What Others Think of Him During and After Receiving Intervention	(Jeff: Outlier)	Shame Embarrassment	I: Do your friends know you are dyslexic? J (11) "No, I don't tell anyone. I just don't, cause I just don't tell anybody. I'm fine if no one knows, but I know all my teachers know." J (11) "Cause I'm a straight A student, so they don't think I struggle in really anything." I: Did your friends know you went to reading intervention? J (12) "Nope…they knew that on certain days I'd get checked out at a certain time, but didn't know where I

			was going." J (13) "Like I didn't even tell anybody in elementary school that I was dyslexic. I did really well in math and I still do really well in math. I didn't tell them and most guys just don't care." I: What do you think they'd (friends) ask? J (13) "Like what is it like, what do you have troubles with, is it really backwards, like backwards writing and stuff." I: Would it bother you to tell them you are dyslexic? J (12) "No. I just, I just don't cause then, cause some of them just ask a lot of questions so I don't really tell them." I: Do you think your friends would look at you differently? J (13) "I don't really know. Maybe, but maybe not. I don't know exactly." J (13) "Like I have certain friends that I trust that I'd tell them, that I know that they won't ask a bunch of questions, but I know kids that will ask a lot of questions. I've told them certain things and then they'll go tell one of their friends."

CATEGORIES FROM CODING
RESEARCH QUESTION

#3 WHAT IS IT LIKE TO EXPERIENCE SCHOOL AS A DYSLEXIC

STUDENT?

Categories	Definition	Code	Participant Quote
Feelings Being in School Before Receiving Intervention	Student feelings experiencing school prior to receiving intervention		
		Struggle	C (8) "Hard times. Lots of crying." A (3-4)"Learning money. I couldn't remember the faces and I couldn't count." A (10) "We had to read a passage at home and then take it back. I didn't like that part." "I memorized the whole entire sentence." C: (3) "In second grade is when I struggled the most, but we threw away everything but this thing. I still don't know how to spell penguins." "It was a terrible year."
		Frustration Stress	J (5) "In first grade when I'd come home, I'd have a fluency sheet that I had to read for a minute every single night for my homework, so that just really made me really frustrated all the time." B (6) "Whenever I started having to read chapter books, having to write long paragraphs, and the tests would stress me out." J (3) "It (getting diagnosed) was slow, and I was very stressed all the time." J (4) "I was stressed all the time, I didn't like school. I didn't want to really go anywhere." "In second grade it was different, we'd bring home a book every night. "I would come home, sit at the table for hours. I'd come at 3:30 and I'd be here till five trying to do, trying to read. "
		Bullied	B (8) "They (her friends) made me feel dumb sometimes, make fun of me. "They would mock me and my writing and my reading."
		Anger	B (4) "It (retention) made me upset because I made new friends that wasn't

			going to, I couldn't hang out with anymore." "It made me mad because I don't like redoing grades. It makes me upset." B (7) "Other people got their grades higher than me. They didn't get their sentences corrected as much as I did." "It made me upset."
		Defiance	I: Can you describe what kindergarten or first grade was like? P (5) "I just wouldn't do it."
		Feeling Different	B (4) "It made me feel different, and I don't know, it changed how I felt about myself a little bit when I was little." "Thinking I can't read, I don't know how to spell correctly like other people do." I: How did you feel in your class doing things differently? A (14) "I was kind of mad. Kind of okay with it." A (10) "I had to stay with the third-graders because I was in fourth grade." "It was better I guess."
		Bad Feeling Like They Were Cheating	A (6) "If I couldn't read something, the teacher would pull me out with another kid and the kid would read it and give me answers." "I felt terrible. I was like, am I cheating?" A (7) Sometimes I would cheat and grab another book and just look at the pictures."
Outcomes That Occurred in School Prior to Receiving Intervention	Student outcomes that occurred in school before receiving intervention		
		Learning Not Occurring	J (4) "I think before second grade, the summer between first and second grade, I think I went to like this reading thing, but it didn't really help me. I just like didn't go to it at all." A (4) "I had to go to this place for reading (in 1st)". I: Did it help? A (4) "No." (an emphatic "no"). "We were doing vocabulary all the time." I: So, you went into special education in 1st grade, did that help make things

			easier? A (6) "Not really." A (10) "In the 4th grade, that teacher, she moved away and went to a different school, so I went to another class because I didn't stay in there. There was another special education class, so I went in there." A (12) "In the middle of 3rd something happened, and she was kind of breaking the rules, so she got out of school before everything caught up to her." "So she left and then in the middle of 3rd grade I went to this other thing." J (5) "My mom and dad, they'd both get frustrated at me cause they didn't know what was happening, why I couldn't read, why I was having trouble spelling and all that."
		Over-worked	C (8)"I would get home like at three o'clock…I would have a snack,…then we would go home…from three to like seven o'clock it would be me doing my homework. From like kindergarten to third, fourth, fifth grade. Me doing homework, cause I had spelling, study, tests, like stuff I missed." "We would go over stuff just so I could get it." C (9) "My mom would make me redo it, and I would do it until seventh grade, until like seven o'clock. And then I would start my shower." C (9) "In 3rd grade I was doing my work at my house…my family ate and then I was doing my homework so I didn't eat with them, then I had to take my shower and I was eating a peanut butter sandwich cause I didn't have time…" I: How much time would you say you spend on homework? A (23) "Two hours." Like in social studies. You have to look it up in the textbook and all that stuff and I'm like, next page, next page. On rare occasions I have nothing and I'm like, yes!"
Positive Feelings Being in School During Intervention	Positive student feelings experiencing school during intervention		
		Positive	J (5) "…but as I progressed I just started feeling way better about school and

		Feelings Due to Progress	everything else." J (3) "Beginning of 4th grade is when I actually was okay with going to school…because I felt better about myself." I: Did you ever get pulled out by a reading specialist? P: (12) Mm, huh. I: Did it help? P: (12) "Yeah."
		Relief of Stress	J (4) "I wasn't as stressed anymore. I could actually read better. I could write better. So, it just made school easier for me."
		Acknowledging Their Deficit	C (4) "We had to write a persuasive essay. So I picked a Dyslexia Assisted App." "It just came to my mind and I picked it."
		Empathy for other children with dyslexia	"…I just want to help kids. "I want them to be like my brother and get diagnosed younger so then they don't have to go through all of this." "I wish I could help kids cause that would make a difference."
Negative Feelings Being in School During Intervention	Negative student feelings experiencing school during intervention		
		Apathy	P: (11) "I don't really care if they (the teachers read things to him). I don't even like school to be honest." I: (11) Are you just doing it (school) till you get it done? P: (11) Till I have to get it done. I: If you could do anything after you finish school what would you want to do? P: (11) "Nothing." P: (13) "I'm just done with it."
		Resentment	I: You look like you are built like a football player. I mean you should play." P (11) "I have tutoring and tutoring." "I don't like it. It helps me I just don't

			like it." "It just wastes my time. I like to do other stuff not tutoring." I: Did it help you by memorizing words when you were in reading lab? P: "I didn't have a choice."
		Different	A: (1) "Well, I don't like being different from everyone." A: (2) "In school when I have to get out all this stuff and people are like, what's that? I have to explain it. I don't like doing that." "Like the reading pen. They're like, what's that? I'm like, the thing that reads." A: "I used to have to bring an iPad that would take pictures of the Smartboard, so it could read it to me, so I would have to have an iPad out and everyone would go, why can't I have my phone out or something like that." A: (3) "Like, every time we had to take a test, I had to go to the other building because that's where they read it to me and I have to get up in front of everyone and walk out."
Teacher Actions that Produced Positive Student Feelings	Actions of teachers that created positive student feelings and outcomes		
		Teachers Giving Accommodations	R (14) "My math teacher, she always gives me an extra day." A (8) "My third grade teacher helped me a lot. Instead of like spelling the words, I could draw the words. I could sit at her table and we would do the spelling." A (14) "I was happy that a person (the teacher at her table) could read it to me not a computer." A (13) "I would go over to her (the teacher's) table and do math with her." "I had to sit at her table and she would read them (the worksheets) to me." A (14) "We would always go to that table and sit there when she read it to us and explained it." C (9) "I have less work to do, like my teachers help me do stuff." C (10) "All my teachers help me, like they get it." I: If you don't know it (the work), do they (the teachers) let you bring it

			home? P: (10) "They're starting to." "They got in trouble for not answering questions. My mom went to the school."
Teacher Actions that Produced Negative Feelings	Actions of teachers that created negative student feelings when in school.		
		Mad/Angry	A (12) "I was just like mad at her (teacher) because I was like we have no idea what it (the book) is about." C (6) "My third grade teacher told my mom I can't teach your daughter how to read (in 3rd grade)." I: What would your teachers do? (when you would just draw) B (7) "They would get mad at me if I ended up doing something else even if it stressed me out." B (8) "She wanted me to at least try" (Reading aloud)
		Sadness	C (14) "I used to put my name and then a smiley face because I was happy, so she (the teacher) put a sad face because I got a bad grade, I guess. Like I don't know what…" I: How did it make you feel when your teacher put a sad face on your paper? C (14) "Oh, so sad." C: (1) "There was this essay about stuff…you can see that she (the teacher) marked out so much stuff." I: How do you feel when you received your paper back? C: (1) "Well, looking back on it now like so sad cause I know I did this really hard, you know a first grader trying to write a paragraph and was struggling." "Sad, cause I know I did so much about it and then she just marked it all out."
		Frustration	A (8) "Frustrated. That the teacher would not help me." A (15) "When a teacher hands you a piece of paper and says, …what's the

			title, blah, blah, blah, but you also had to read the sentence and give like five sentences about it. That was hard." R (13) "Sometimes I get frustrated with something, every week we have like this reading thing, so we have to read and then write it down." A (9) "In 3rd I had to go to her (SPED), every morning she would hand out a paper and you would grab the paper, then you had to read it, write it, write some words, then put it back in but she didn't help you." A (11) "Everyone could not do it. Like when we read that chapter book, we had to take a test over it. I had no idea what it was about." I: If you don't know it (the work), do they (the teachers) let you bring it home? P: (10) "They're starting to." "They got in trouble for not answering questions. My mom went to the school." C: (7) "I thought I was dumb like always having red ink and stuff. Always having to take my spelling test again because we had two times to always do it, if you get it wrong you have to redo it."
Teacher Actions That Could Produce Positive Outcomes	Student articulations of what teacher actions could produce positive outcomes in school for children with dyslexia.		
		Oral Answers	I: "Are you able to show what you know just by answering it orally? P: (6) "No." A (22) "Like they should help more instead of saying put on headphones and let Siri mess it all up." A (9) "She (3rd grade teacher) helped me a little, but I had that other class (SPED), so she thought that other class was supposed to help me to read."

		Confusion on Who Delivers Instruction Time Spelling Breaks Grading Spelling Reading Text to Student	R (14) "I would ask for more time on an assignment." "Instead of having to get it in like the next day." "Sometimes they give me an extra day, but not always." J (7) "Don't rush them, let them take as much time as they need on tests, writing paragraphs, reading. Let them have as much time as they need." I: Time is a big pressure? P: "Yes. It's always been a big pressure for me." R (14) "Let them take a break if they need one." "Because it's very important to take a break." "You just get tired…take a break and come back to it." J (7) "Don't grade on spelling. J (8) "You can misspell words really easily. I: So, if your teacher or mom reads the information to you and you talk about it does that make a difference? P: (7) Mm, hmm. A (23) "I'd rather the teacher read it to me or I don't really know. Some papers if I can read it, I just save it for him. I'm like, I'll do that at home. It's fine." A (24) "Me and my mom sit down on the couch and we do it all."
Student's Perception of Teacher's Knowledge of Dyslexia	Students' perceptions of what teachers know, understand, and care about dyslexia.		
		Teacher Lack of Understand	I: What would you want to tell your teacher? P: (9) "Nothing." I: Do you think your teacher understands what it is?

		ing of Dyslexia	P: (9) "No." I: Do you suggest to your teachers that maybe that would work (reading text to him). P: (7) "They won't do it, ---they don't really care." A (15) "Like, teachers don't get it and then I just sit there…" A (22) "That they should know stuff about that." (Dyslexia) C (10-11) "My least favorite time of the year is the first week of school, cause they don't know, they had the conference (with mom) and they're like getting used to it. "I went to the bathroom crying on picture day, like right before pictures, cause he (the teacher) didn't get me." R (13) "I wish that like the teachers would understand what it meant …they all know that I have dyslexia but they don't quite understand what it means." J (7) "I think they think it's like just getting words flipped around." "I would tell them it could be words flipped around but it's usually reading."
Student Perceptions of Who They Are Within School Settings	Who the participants believe they are within the community of school.		
		Quiet	R (12) "I think I'm sometimes like the quiet kid that just kind of gets on the iPad and kind of just does it, does what he needs to do." R (13) "I don't talk a lot. I don't engage with talking a bunch at school." "I just feel like I need to get stuff done." "I try and kind of just get quiet and then I get relaxed so I don't talk." J (11) "But I can also be super quiet. Like if I don't want to talk I'll just sit there and I'm dead silent." B (14) "At first I'm the quiet one. "Mostly quiet through first to third hour." "If we have a bunch of new people come in to see the school I'm very shy." "If I'm moody, I'll be quiet. C (14) "Quiet." "Yeah I can be like with a group of kids I'll say like one

			word." "I don't know. I just am. I'm quiet in all my classes really cause I don't know why." A (19) "The quiet one." "No one talks to me because they think I'm shy, but I just don't have a conversation to start." "I'm like, hi, and then that's it. "I don't know what to say." (sped class) A (20) "My third hour is science and I don't have a lot of friends in that class so I'm just in the back going, yep."
		Talkative	.B (14) If I'm in a good mood, I'll be really talkative." "…you get to know me I'm really loud." "Talkative." I: So, in your other classes, how are those? A (20) "Well, in my second hour I'm a Chatty Cathy. Because I have friends in my second hour and it's like exploratory class so I'm like all over the place."
		Funny One	R (13) "Sometimes the funny kid, but sometimes, most of the time I'm the quiet kid. Not at recess though." J (11) "I'm usually the funny one, cause I, everybody just laughs occasionally."
		Loner	I: In class, who do you think you are? (Quiet kid, funny one…) P: (13) "I don't like to talk to anybody. I don't like to be around people."