

**The Perceptions of Teachers, Principals, and Central Office  
Administrators in Regard to Educational Practices  
For Students with Dyslexia**

by

Sharon B. Kempf, Ed.D.

Research conducted in a southeast Texas school district reported positive results with the use of Conscious Discipline® for students with dyslexia. The principal, one classroom teacher, and the dyslexia and intervention teacher were interviewed at four elementary schools and two middle schools. In addition, two central office administrators were also interviewed. The participants were asked “What practices or methods do you use in order to support the emotional needs of your students with dyslexia?” and “Describe some behavioral problems, if any, that your students with dyslexia have experienced.”

All of the principals, classroom teachers, and dyslexia and intervention teachers stated the use of Conscious Discipline® was a major component which supported the emotional needs of their students with dyslexia. Although a full-time counselor is employed at each campus, none of the classroom teachers mentioned the need for counseling services for their students with dyslexia. The research indicated that the classroom teachers, through the use of Conscious Discipline® had incorporated strategies that enabled students with dyslexia to build confidence and self-esteem which in turn promoted academic learning. The following findings were noted:

- Safe Place-Teachers reported that the safe place played an important role in minimizing stress and frustration for students with dyslexia. The students with dyslexia learned when they were reaching their frustration level and needed “The Safe Place.” After being in the “Safe Place,” students with dyslexia returned to small group or to their desk for work completion. The frustration, anger, self-doubt, or other feelings students with dyslexia experience was embraced and students with dyslexia learned to work through their feelings in a safe environment without leaving the classroom. Also the safe place allowed students with dyslexia to be empowered and in charge of their feelings and behaviors.
- Classroom Family- diminished negative behaviors (misbehavior, off-task behavior) by students with dyslexia.
- Classroom Jobs- A very important emotional support as reported by one middle school teacher. Students with dyslexia learned responsibility, know they were missed when absent, and felt valued and important.
- Greeting at the door- allowed classroom teachers to be proactive and promoted a safe, positive, and happy classroom environment
- Encouragement-the use of verbal and written encouragement helped students with dyslexia to complete assignments and develop confidence and self-esteem.
- Wish Well-Let students with dyslexia know they were missed when absent and know the other classmates were thinking about them and sending them warm thoughts.

- The components of Conscious Discipline® helped to establish stronger relationships between students with dyslexia and their classroom teachers.
- One dyslexia and intervention teacher discussed how many middle school students were in “survival mode” and importance of students feeling safe and having that safe environment.
- One middle school principal noticed how Conscious Discipline® impacted her students with dyslexia. She stated that she noticed how students with dyslexia were definitely more willing to take a risk (academically) and participate in class at a higher level. In the past, she stated that students with dyslexia often ducked their heads and tried not be noticed.

In addition, only one office referral was reported by six of the principals were participated in the study. However, 142 students in all were identified with dyslexia between the two middle schools and four elementary schools.

\*Note: Dyslexia is a neurological learning disability which can effect reading accuracy and/or fluent word recognition, spelling, writing, and decoding. Some students with dyslexia may experience repeated failures due to reading difficulties which subsequently may lead to higher levels of anxiety, stress, and/or frustration than experienced by other students.