

Liz- Dyslexia

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: [00:00:00] Hey there. I'm Michelle Andrews and I'm your host for the Pep Talk podcast. This episode is all about dyslexia. What exactly is dyslexia? What does this mean for SLPs? And how to work on your speech and language goals with kids already diagnosed or may need a referral? My guest speaker today is Liz Vander Brook. Liz received her bachelor's in early childhood education from the University of Texas and then went on to get her master's degree in Communication Sciences and Disorders from the University of Houston. She has been a speech therapist for almost 12 years all over the us but is now speaking with us from Switzerland where she found, where she founded her own private practice and has been working

with English speaking families in Switzerland for the past three years. Okay. First we need to go over some formalities for the course by going over our . Financial disclosures. My financial disclosures include I have a Teachers Pay Teachers Boom, learning and Teach with Medley store.

Under pep Talk L L C I am also the [00:01:00] founder and manager of the Pep Talk podcast. My non-financial disclosures include Speech Arcade is an in-kind sponsor for this podcast. Liz's financial disclosures include she has a T P T store as well as her own website, the speech therapist.ch, where she sells her activities.

Liz's non-financial disclosures include she is the founder of the speech therapist in Switzer in Switzerland, which includes the speech therapist.ch in accent mod ch, is that how I should say that? Okay.

Track 1: a Yeah, exactly. Instead of.com ch de designates that it's from Switzerland or in Switzerland.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Oh, okay. Which makes a lot of sense for your Instagram handle. The speech therapist I've always just said like the speech therapist.

Track 1: Oh my God, I didn't even think about that.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: But it makes

Track 1: That makes sense.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: being in Switzerland. Yeah. Okay. Now it makes even more sense. I thought it was just because of like a [00:02:00] German spin on things or something, which I guess that is maybe where it stemmed from,

Track 1: That would make sense too.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Okay. Now here are the learner objectives for this course. You'll be able to list five overarching signs of dyslexia. List three, comorbid diagnosis with dyslexia. And you'll, you'll be able to define the SLPs role when it comes to to dyslexia identification and intervention. You'll be able to describe five strategies to use when working on speech therapy goals with kids with dyslexia. Okay, let's get started.

Today we are talking all about dyslexia and what to do in therapy. Let's build our confidence in identifying dyslexia early and how best to work with dyslexia. I am so excited to introduce today's guest speaker, Liz Vander Brook. Hi there, Liz.

Track 1: Hey there. So excited to be here

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: I'm so happy to have you all the way from Switzerland. So right now it's little after 10:00 AM for me. What [00:03:00] time is it for you right now?

Track 1: a little after 5:00 PM actually, literally on the other side of the planet,

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: That's so cool that we can chat and you're so far away. This is amazing. , very cool. Switzerland is such a cool place. I know I went there when I was a child. I definitely wanna go back as an adult. It's beautiful. I hear good things. Um, let's get started. I know I gave a little bio of you, but go ahead and tell me a little bit more about yourself, um, and why you're here today.

Track 1: Well, like you said, I am in Switzerland right now where I've had my private practice working with expats. So they're mostly people who have also moved from the US but there's also a lot of families here that just speak English. Um, and during these past three years with my own private practice, I've received a lot of referrals for students with reading difficulties and or dyslexia, [00:04:00] which led me to kind of figure out what the Swiss school system is like.

And it turns out it's a lot different than the us. There's a lot less . Specialized support like dyslexia specialists or special ed teachers. So as a speech therapist, I've received a lot of that overflow, which kind of sent me on this journey as to how SLPs fit into the dyslexia equation. What are we allowed to do?

What should we do regarding assessment and intervention? And today's episode is kind of a big culmination of that journey for me, and I'm assuming that most of the listeners are SLPs today. So my goal is twofold, really. One, I want you to be able to look at the kids on your caseload and hone in on the ones who might have dyslexia.

So then you can start that process of getting them the extra help they need. And then two, to [00:05:00] empower you to use your expertise as an S L P to feel comfortable working with those kids with dyslexia, because literacy is not owned by a single discipline, and SLPs have a lot to bring to the table.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Awesome. I really am so excited about this episode because I'm gonna be honest, I really don't know a lot about dyslexia, , and in grad school. I know we talked about it a little bit, but it's not something I feel like I could be confident saying, yeah, like this kid should have a dyslexia evaluation or, or what to even do what?

Who do I even tell that to? Where do I go? Where do I start? And then for kids that have dyslexia that are already on my caseload, how can I best, uh, serve them in speech? By making sure that my lesson plans will be effective for, effective for them I dunno, we'll get into all the what to do, but yeah, like if we need to like not have like certain reading or set up the reading a certain way or how, what materials I use. so yes. Let's get started and let's, let's first [00:06:00] define what dyslexia is. Can you give me a great definition?

Track 1: great starting point 'cause you're not alone on that. I think in our grad school it was mentioned maybe once or twice, so you're definitely not alone. So it's a bit wordy, but just hang with me. The International Dyslexia Association defines dyslexia as a specific learning disability that is neurobiological and origin.

It's characterized by difficulties with accurate and or fluent word recognition, and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, these difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language. That is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Woo

Track 1: it's wording. Yeah.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: It is. And don't worry, everyone, you we're gonna get into that , [00:07:00] we're gonna break that down for you. And also you could hit the, like back 15 seconds and like listen to it a couple times

Track 1: Over and over

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Um, yeah. But we're gonna break that down into like each sentence, and you're gonna understand that really well in during this episode.

Um, but first, how, also, how common is dyslexia?

Track 1: There's actually a big range that you can find in research between five to 20% of the population in the us.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Wow, that seems really high.

Track 1: Mm-hmm. a lot higher than I was expecting as well.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: yeah, that, so is there a range of severity of dyslexia? Can you really struggle with dyslexia? And then can it just be like a little bit of a struggle? Or like, I wonder if all those people struggle the same amount.

Is that, I don't know how to word that question.

Track 1: From what I've read there is, it's on a spectrum basically, or a continuum. So you can have, it depends on the instruction you've received. If you've [00:08:00] received, um, a mix of explicit and systematic phonological awareness instruction with maybe not so much, then you'll have . Kind of a foundation with some cracks.

But if you've really only been told to look at pictures or not learned the phonological skills explicitly, then you might have a lot more difficulty with reading and it will be a lot worse. So I think you, you are looking at it from the right perspective. It's not black and white. Everyone fits into this box of dyslexia.

It is definitely an organic thing that can be different severities.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Oh, okay. Yeah, I, I gotcha. Let's learn a few more things about dyslexia before we get into the other stuff. So, and I think we've learned that there is a genetic component. Tell me more about that.

Track 1: Correct. We definitely know dyslexia is heavily influenced by genetics of kids who have [00:09:00] a parent or sibling with reading difficulties or dyslexia. 40 to 66% will go on to develop reading difficulty themselves. That's a lot. That's really high.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Mm-hmm.

Track 1: Estimates, however, are a lot lower if only siblings, but no parents are affected at around 20 to 30%.

But it's also really high if both parents are affected with 20, with 76 to 78%. So it's definitely heavily influenced by genetics.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Wow, that's so interesting. And that's great to know for doing the case history when you're getting to know. A client for the first time, or if you suspect dyslexia, to ask those questions. And that could really pinpoint, all right, this, this ups our odds that this is possibly dyslexia if there's a family history, especially the parents.

Yeah. Okay, so I know we read that long definition. Now let's dig in . So what exactly is dyslexia?[00:10:00]

Track 1: Exactly. Let's break it apart a little bit into some more bite-sized pieces. The first sentence says, dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological and origin. We're actually going to break this one into two concepts and dive deeper into each. The first part that says it's a specific learning disability.

What is that and what does that mean? This opens the door to talk about the research. About the laws the US has around dyslexia, starting with the individuals with Disabilities Education Act. If you work in the schools, you've probably heard of it, it lists 13 categories of eligibility for special ed services in the public schools.

One of those 13 categories is a specific learning disability or S L D, which includes dyslexia as one type of a specific learning disability. So I want you to

[00:11:00] envision an umbrella, but on that umbrella, it's written developmental language disorder because a specific learning disability falls under that bigger category.

And there's been a lot of research around developmental language disorder and dyslexia asking if a child is diagnosed with developmental language disorder, does that automatically mean that they have dyslexia too? . No. So let's figure that out. In the case of dyslexia, the unexpected deficit is in word reading with adequate and appropriate instruction in reading.

In the case of developmental language disorder, the unexpected deficit is in overall language development with adequate stimulation in human language interaction. So you can already tell there that dyslexia is much more specific to just reading. [00:12:00] Kids with dyslexia have weak phonological skills. While some kids with developmental language disorder may have strong phonological skills, and that's also true for the opposite, kids with dyslexia may have really strong non phonological skills like comprehension, but kids with developmental language disorder will have weak non phonological skills.

According to research, about 48% of kids diagnosed with developmental language disorder also fulfill the criteria for the diagnosis of dyslexia. And about 58% of kids classified as dyslexic have developmental language disorder. There's a huge overlap. So the main thing to remember about that dyslexia and developmental language disorder are two distinct things, but they're often, they're, they're often co-occurring disorders.[00:13:00]

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: That is so important to know. many kids on our caseload do you think have developmental language disorder? Probably a lot, if not all of them. Um, you know, that's what we're working on. Language or, you know, it could be Arctic, but you know, that's a huge part of what we do. And so to be able to know that in the back of our head that this child is already at risk due to statistics, uh, of having dyslexia.

So to keep an eye, you know, be watchful and we'll get into the things to look for here in a bit too. Um, okay. Are there any other frequently co-occurring diagnoses?

Track 1: There's one more I want you to keep, keep an eye out for, and it's a D H D I think we're all familiar with that term. Um, the rate of people who have a D H D and dyslexia is between 18 to 45%. So there's still a huge statistical impact of if a child is diagnosed with A D H D, just to kind of be aware [00:14:00] that dyslexia could also be there somewhere.

It's not a hundred percent, but it's still big enough that I want you to keep that just on your radar. And why is this important for

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: that's high. Oh, sorry.

Track 1: good. Why is this important for SLPs to know? Because like you said, just a few seconds ago, some, if not, most of the kids on your caseload probably have a developmental language disorder or specific learning disability or a D H D diagnosis.

So when you see those kids just have a little kind of, you know, vibration alarm bell going off saying, okay, maybe dyslexia is there too, just so it's on your radar. And then you can, then you'll know to look for possible other signs that we'll get into in a minute.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Okay. Now let's revisit the second part of that first sentence.

Track 1: so that second part says that dyslexia is neurobiological in origin. What does that mean? Well, [00:15:00] we have F M R I studies that have shown that dyslexic brains actually have different activation patterns when reading than others who don't have dyslexia like Michelle, did you like your neuroscience or neuroanatomy classes in grad school?

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: I did, I really liked them. My undergrad's in psychology, so, and all things, the brain, I, I really did like them. Yeah. So go ahead,

Track 1: I did too. So, perfect

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Lay it on me. Give me a neuro lesson right now.

Track 1: Here we go. So the left side of the brain is primarily responsible for language, right? And within that left hemisphere, there's three areas which are activated in reading tasks that tend to work together for kids without dyslexia. And that is the Brocas area, the parietal temporal area, and the occipital temporal area.

What if, what F MRIs have told us is that the Brocas area is actually in overdrive [00:16:00] during reading in people with dyslexia. Why? Why is that? Because the other areas that should be utilized in conjunction with Brocas area

actually aren't firing. They are not being used. So this broker's area of the brain is having to work overtime to compensate for this misfiring.

The brain is having to make different routes to yield the same result. The slow laborious reading that so often characterizes how kids with dyslexia read is due to language actually being processed in a different way. The good news, yay. Good news is that research has shown with explicit and systematic phonological awareness and instruction.

These parts of the brain can actually rewire to be more effective. So we know that that kind of instruction really does work and helps them read. It's awesome what science can show us.[00:17:00]

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: That's so awesome. Y'all can't see us right now 'cause this is a podcast, but like, mind-blown emoji, like that just clicked so much for me to hear you explain it like that. Like this, this part of the brain and this is what's happening and this is why it, it, it really clicks. 'cause before you told me that, I don't know what I thought about dyslexia, like it was this mystery reason why kids have trouble reading.

And that just for me, it w it or probably a lot of SLPs with , at least a little background in, in neuro just really clicks. I That makes a lot of sense. Thank you for finally telling me what dyslexia even is. , um, that really helps so much . Um, okay. So let's get back to it.

Track 1: So the next part of the definition, dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and or fluent word recognition. And by poor spelling and decoding abilities, you might be thinking, okay, well how does a speech [00:18:00] therapist fit into this? I didn't hear speech or language in that definition. Fair.

Let's get into that. So language disorders are defined by asha, the American Speech and Hearing Association as an impairment with comprehension and or use of a spoken, written, or other communication symbol system. So now let's circle back to that sentence. Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and or fluent word recognition.

That word recognition is talking about the comprehension of written words, written communication. Let's keep going, and by poor spelling here, we're talking about the use of written communication, also mentioned by Asha. Let's keep going and decoding abilities. Here, it's talking about translating the print [00:19:00] or written communication into speech.

So it's literally reading the letters d o g, and saying Dog out loud. All of these elements of this definition are referring to written language and either the comprehension or use of it, and that's where we speech therapists come in. Woo-hoo. The next sentence though. Says, these difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.

So first, what is the phonological, phonological component of language? Here we're talking about skills like phonological awareness. Sounds familiar, right? Like how language is made up of sounds that are represented as symbols, which we call letters, and then the ability to manipulate and play with these [00:20:00] sounds and letters.

Again, sounds familiar, right? The key here, the key here is that kids with dyslexia have difficulty with this after they've received adequate instruction. Adequate instruction is explicit, intense, and systematically focused. On the sound structure of language and how sounds relate to letters. If the kids have received this great explicit instruction and still had difficulty, then it's a sign that they could benefit from further screening or an evaluation for dyslexia.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: That's so great, Liz. I needed that definition. Broken down and explained like that. , thank you so much. And I'm sure all the other listeners, you know, you hear it once, you might, uh, had to like rewind and listen to it again and then get it, getting it broken down into steps like that. I really feel like I am light years ahead of where I was with my knowledge of dyslexia than when I woke up this morning.[00:21:00]

I hope everyone feels that way too. Uh, that was very, very helpful.

Um, and so also talking about that, what are the signs that we should be looking for in the kids on our caseload?

Track 1: Great question. So there's some, there's some signs that can be broken up to GR by grade level or by age, but the big ones that I'm going to give you today are the family history of reading difficulties or dyslexia. So kind of like we said earlier, exactly what we said earlier of kids who have a parent or like a brother or sister who might also have dyslexia, 40 to 60% will go on to develop reading difficulties themselves.

So that's something really important to look for. If you have anyone on your caseload and you look in their case history and it says, um, brother or sister, or

mom or dad had dyslexia, definitely keep that in the back of your mind to start looking for some of these other [00:22:00] signs like. Difficulty reading words in isolation.

Now we know sometimes it's easier to read a full sentence because you're using the context and it's even easier to read a whole sentence if there's pictures involved. What's difficult and what really breaks down into do you have the skills is when you have an individual word, you have nothing to lean on, but your reading skills, but your phonological skills.

So it's difficulty reading words in isolation and difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words. So you may have done all of the short vowel a words and then all of a sudden in comes a different word that the student hasn't seen yet. But if they don't have a good foundation of phonological skills, they won't be able to sound it out accurately if they do have a good foundation of phonological skill [00:23:00] skills.

A word they've never seen before. They should be able to sound it out. If you think about, like you and I when we went to grad school, there were some brain terms in there and science terms that we had never been told how to read before, but we used our phonological awareness to figure it out. Kids with dyslexia really struggle with this.

They also have difficulty with spelling, which makes sense, right? If you can't sound it out and you can't associate the letter with the word, the sound or the sound with the letter, you're going to struggle putting that on paper into a correct spelling. And the last one is difficulty with oral reading.

So difficulty reading out loud. They could sound really slow because they're taking . Extra time to translate the letter into the sound. They could read the wrong word. They could guess the word it feels, and it looks really effortful [00:24:00] and laborious. And then they're reading without much positivity or emotion because they're so focused on the reading part.

So the key here too, is you can read slowly and read every word correctly, or you could read really quickly and read every word incorrectly. We want to find a balance. The goal is a balance in fluency and accuracy. We want them to read at a good pace and reading every word correct, not really quick or really slow, and not getting the words right.

So it, it's a balance. We're looking for all of these things.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Ah, okay. I thought of a question. So I had a kid on my caseload at one point and he, uh, he was working on comprehending stuff and he would read, say a short story and he just guess like, like he, when he [00:25:00] got to a word, I guess he was having trouble decoding. He would just guess. And sometimes it wasn't even anywhere near what the actual word was.

Or not even like, not even phonetically close. Is that something that is a sign or that kids with

Track 1: I would definitely, uh, it would definitely register on my radar because that is something that kids with dyslexia do because they don't know how to sound it out. They don't know how to use those phonological skills to correctly sound it out. So they'll just guess that would fall under the difficulty accurately decoding unfamiliar words exactly what you said, or if he was reading out loud.

I don't remember if you said he was reading out loud

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Yeah, he

Track 1: Exactly. So that's also one of those big signs. It all centers around that word reading. And if he was reading the whole sentence and he still didn't get that word correct. He wasn't using the context around it either. So there would definitely be some more digging to figure out the whole puzzle.[00:26:00]

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Okay. Yeah, it makes sense because he had, it was a short story, so he did have like that, something to lean on, to guess from, you know, with the context of the story. And so he would guess something. Topic , but it wasn't quite at all the words. So that, that's interesting. Um, okay. So I definitely have a better understanding of what dyslexia is now. when we do su suspect dyslexia with one of our students, what do we do first? Who, who's our first point of contact?

Track 1: Great questions. So before I answer that, I want to touch on the American Speech Language Hearing Association's position paper on the SLPs roles and responsibilities. So SLPs have a major responsibility and role to play in supporting both spoken and written language development in students. SLPs receive training that enables them to play a role in the identification.

[00:27:00] assessment and intervention of students who struggle to read and write, including dyslexia. So just like we heard from the definition, it talks about written communication, ASHA's positions, ASHA's position paper also

mentions we have a big role to play in developing written language development as well, and that's where that comes, comes into.

However, do you also remember the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act? It is a national law that is implemented in different ways at the state level. So it does not specify how dyslexia is defined or how services should be provided for students with dyslexia in public schools. As a result, the process in identifying and treating kids with dyslexia varies greatly across states.

So the [00:28:00] first thing, the, the big blanket statement I would use to answer that question, unfortunately would be to tell you to check your local laws and or school to see if there's already a process in place. Because like for example, I think I'm from Texas, and I know you're in Texas, so let's use Texas as an example.

The Texas Education Agency actually has a dyslexia handbook that anyone can download. It's free for the public, and it outlines specifically the exact process for screening, evaluation, and treatment of kids with dyslexia. It goes into such detail to say the only people that can complete a dyslexia screener are two, an indivis, an individual who is certified or licensed in dyslexia.

Or a classroom teacher who holds a valid certification for kindergarten and grade one, and [00:29:00] oh my goodness, there's so much amazing information in this dyslexia handbook. But it tells you step by step what needs to be done. But that might be different than Virginia or California. So the answer to that is

I hate Gray , but you have to go check with your local school and state laws to make sure that you're doing it right.

Michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Okay. That's, that's so helpful. W And I will link the Texas Dyslexia Handbook in the show notes and on my website. Um, and then if you live in a different state, you can at least look at that and then try to find that handbook. But for your state, , because it will be like, like she said, it'll be different.

Um, so you can't just go by Texas if you don't live in Texas. But that's so interesting. So I'm in Texas too, so that handbook is helpful for me. , would you, would my first step though, be to contact Well, the parent or the teacher at the [00:30:00] school? Um, who, who would I contact first?

Track 1: according to the Texas law, there should be a universal dyslexia screener in place. In kindergarten at least, which is implemented by the general ed teacher. So if you have a child on your caseload and you start seeing some of those overarching signs and you're like, Ooh, I'm not sure, maybe we should look into this more.

I would go to the teacher first and see what the child's results were on that dyslexia screener. How is her or his performance in class right now? Does the teacher also have some concerns and start that conversation to see what the best next step might be.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Okay, so if you didn't work at a school though, I guess you would just have to kind of prompt the parent

Track 1: so I'm in private practice, so that's a great question. If I were to suspect one of my students to have dyslexia, I would, yes, talk to my [00:31:00] parents. I. Talk to the parents of the child and say, these are some of my concerns. I would like to also talk to the teacher and see if there are other signs or other red flags that maybe we should look into this a little bit more.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Okay. That's really helpful. So since there is that universal screening in place, you said around kindergarten or, or first, um, does that mean it's typically caught or do some kids sneak on by

Track 1: Oh. Wouldn't that be amazing if we just had this diamond of a screener? That for sure. Yeah.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: just caught everybody

Track 1: Um, I mean, early identification is one of the most important parts, right? So that we can start getting these kids the support they need. The earlier we can, we can identify them, the sooner we can close the gap, if you will, because the kids that come into school that actually don't need the explicit instruction [00:32:00] and are just going to learn how to read effortlessly will continue to just get better and better and better and better while our kids who aren't identified yet or even are, are going to struggle a little bit.

So the sooner we can get them that help to bring them closer to the skills of the other kids who are reading fluently and accurately, the better. Unfortunately, identification depends on the state. . The school, what processes they have in place. Also, the dyslexia handbook in Texas mentions trainings and how teachers should be trained, which is great.

Yes, love that. But I don't know how other schools are handling it or how other states are handling that. So it all depends on the situation. Don't we love that answer, ? Unfortunately, I, I can't give a solid answer on that. It depends on the processes [00:33:00] and the, the, the trainings and the skills of those who are implementing those identification processes too.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Right. Yeah. So it very well could be that some kids squeeze on by without, um, getting caught by that initial screener for sure. And then, but the earlier that they receive intervention, the better. Just like, you know, all the stuff that we work on with speech and language, the earlier the better.

Right. Okay, so now let's talk about the, the kids that already have a diagnosis and they're on our, they're on our caseload and we're working on speech and language goals. What are some tips for us?

Track 1: would not be surprised if you do. Um, if they're already diagnosed with dyslexia, they probably either have, well, if they're on your caseload, then they definitely have an I E P. I would look to see if there are already accommodations listed in that i e p that are. Specifically for the dyslexic diagnosis, if they're on a 5 0 4 [00:34:00] and not on your caseload, then there still might be some accommodations that could be helpful.

I know from my experience working with kids with dyslexia, the ones that that have worked the best for my kids are reading aloud the instructions, allowing a little bit of extra time if I'm wanting them to read something, blocking out extra stimuli, that's a big one. So if I'm looking at a whole page of sentences that I want them to read, I'll block out either with my hand or another piece of paper, all of the other sentences.

So they just focus on that one and they're not distracted by everything else. Um, putting learning into new words right after you've taught it. So if you just did the bossy e rule , Then I would have them explain that to me. Okay, now you tell me, you teach me. It's that that old diva goodie you teach me.

Because then they really have to know the information in order to teach you back and then to reteach and [00:35:00] review. Often, and unfortunately I've found with a lot of the kids is you might have spent the last four sessions going over long or short vowels, and then the fourth session comes along and you've asked them some, um, like testing questions, if you will.

And they might get a lot of them wrong still. And it's because they need so much extra exposure and repetition in order for it to like rebuild and rewire that network to make, to make it solid in their brain. So the reteach and the review often is a big one.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: These are so helpful. I'm just gonna kind of like share my thoughts about each one. So the reading aloud, that seems so helpful because if you're, if what you're working on or even evaluating them on is a different task and not reading, then yeah, read it out loud to them so that you can actually assess and work on the skill. want [00:36:00] them to work on and not, don't let that be a barrier to a, a different skill. Right. Um, so that, that makes a lot of sense. I love that one. And then allowing them extra time to complete the task. If it does involve reading that, that really clicks with me because I, I could see, you know, if you didn't know they had dyslexia or you weren't aware of these, the aspects of this, you might think, oh, they don't know the answer.

They're, you know, they're taking too long. But, you know, just to sit back and be like, this involved reading, I'm just gonna go ahead and, you know, mentally prepare. This is gonna, I'm gonna give them extra time. Blocking out, , extra sentences, , so that they can only focus on what you want them to read.

Is that just, do they just get overwhelmed or is it like too many words

Track 1: could be,

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: of them? What's

Track 1: could be

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: idea

Track 1: bringing in the A D H D diagnosis as well. Um, just to be hyper aware of that. If they also have a D H D, that would definitely help. But as far as other kids, I'm not, I'm not sure if it's necessary for the other kids. I just know that that's what's helped with the majority of the kids on my caseload.[00:37:00]

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Yeah. Well that, that's a great tip to, to share for sure. Um, okay. And then putting new learning into their own words. Oh, I love this and this, this sounds

Track 1: everything. Yes.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: for everything , you know, like, what is it? There's some quote, it's like if you can't explain it in a simple way you don't know it, or something.

I don't know. There's a, there's an actual quote on that, but it's, it's to the gist of that, and that makes a lot of sense. Um, Have, and that will help them remember it too. I bet too. And to reteach and review often. , these are such great tips and really good to just have in the back of our head for when we have a kiddo with dyslexia on our, on our caseload, because I just guarantee if you don't already you will.

Um, it just seems to be very prevalent. Okay. I love all those tips. Now let's talk about some success stories. Do you have a story for us when you worked with a child with dyslexia?

Track 1: Yeah,

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Um, something

Track 1: I had some students who came to me from [00:38:00] the US obviously, and they were in a school system that, um, was not teaching . Explicit phonological awareness skills. So of course they were really struggling. They were actually around three years, three grades below where they should be reading. So what we've done is we've started small, like with the C B C words, the short and long vowels, and then some other phonological skills all while the other students at school were way ahead of him.

'cause these kids were older. They're not kindergarten age. So I'll give you an example. We started small with things like C v C words and short and long vowels and other phonological awareness skills, all while the other kids at school were way ahead of him. So you could imagine the toll that took on his confidence. And that's why how we give feedback is so important because for [00:39:00] example, we had been working on the silent E or the bossy E, if you will, and they read the word cape as cap and instead of saying, no, that's not right, try again or wrong that that one's wrong or putting an X by it or what you might do lead with a positive.

For example, say, I can totally see how you read the letters c a P as cap, right? But, but look here, look at this. Look at this letter. At the end of the word, why do you think this letter is here? How should we change how we're reading this? Because of this letter, instead of just telling him what the word is, you want to give him that self-confidence that he can do it, that he knows.

So you want to help them think critically. So that they have the confidence to do this when you're not there because they're reading all the time, right? Someone isn't always there to help them. So [00:40:00] I think it's really important how we provide that feedback to let them take a step back and figure it out as well with you there helping them but not giving them the answer, if that makes sense.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Yeah, yeah. Kind of inch them closer or point it out a little bit, but have them be the one to say it so it builds their

Track 1: Yeah. So he's doing great now and he loves reading and it's a, it's,

I mean, Just.

to see how they've, how far they've come. It's, that's why we do this, right? It's amazing.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: right? Yeah. I love that. And that's so great to, to hear about. So with dyslexia, you know, they really, with early intervention and intervention at all, like they, they can make progress and rewire their brain. Like kind of like we talked about with the neuro stuff. Um, that really is encouraging. So finding out early that a kiddo does have dyslexia can make a huge difference in their whole life.

And I know one thing I'm thinking about is I'm actually starting my private practice and I'm like, I need to make sure that my [00:41:00] intake forms have, um, questions about that. 'cause I need to make sure I'm asking, so all of you that are doing evaluations and maybe have your own practice, consider making sure you're asking about that, even cases for the case history and any, um,

Track 1: exactly. Family history is so important.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Yeah. Uh, it's just so interesting that you live in Switzerland. I was gonna throw in just if you have any, um, any fun facts about being an SLP in Switzerland

Track 1: Sure. Do you wanna like start filming a new episode? No, I'm kidding. , there's so many

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: I know

Track 1: You got expats abroad for sure. Or SLPs abroad. There's not many of us. There's only, I mean a small handful really that even work privately. And

what's been so interesting is there, there's such a huge part of the country that speaks English at home. At school, they speak either Swiss German or high German.[00:42:00]

And so things like dyslexia unfortunately really, really get pushed to the wayside and just don't get identified until they're like in fourth grade. And it then it, it's obviously a little more difficult once there's so much older and they've set in their ways for guessing. And this was how some of the students I have is breaking down those habits.

And that's why early identification can be so important is because the longer they guess words or the longer they don't know how to truly use phonological skills to read and decode, the longer it's going to take to break those habits. I mean, it's just like any habit, right? It takes a long time to break it and reestablish different routines.

And the end goal here is that. there, there's, there's heart surgeons, there's lawyers, there's doctors who have dyslexia. So it is not a roadblock by any [00:43:00] means. You can get around it with the support, with the right support and the right instruction, you can overcome it and work through it and learn the tools and strategies to succeed to be whatever these kids want to be.

And that's the best part. But we have to identify 'em first, and I think that's why this episode is so important because we are on the front lines of seeing some of these kids with some of these overlapping diagnoses that can help us tune our radar as to, oh, I wonder if this, I wonder if the teacher is also thinking dyslexia for this student, because maybe there's some other things that we can be doing to help them with reading.

So we're definitely on the front lines of making sure that some of these students don't quote unquote, fall through the cracks with identification because the earlier we get them that support the earlier we can bridge that gap between the other kids who [00:44:00] don't have dyslexia and help them fulfill their dreams, as corny as that sounds, , right?

We all have the same goal in mind, and that's to help the younger generations become part of society, productive part of society. So we're all in this together.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Absolutely. I know, I hope there's so many SLPs listening to this. I know a bunch of you might have been like, oh, I need to learn more about dyslexia. But I hope just all the LPs listen to this because it really is so important for so many of us, for all of us to have this information

and to know more about dyslexia so that yes, we can be involved in the early intervention and helping these kids Yes.

Fulfill their dreams and feed doctors

Track 1: A ballerina. Yeah, whatever you wanna be.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: whatever they wanna be. And, uh, ballerina. Yeah. But I mean, you need to, reading is no matter what you wanna do, there's text and words all around us. Even just driving somewhere, reading signs and maps and [00:45:00] being able to not struggle in that area as much is crucial. Um, for sure.

Track 1: So here in Switzerland, I. I would say 90% of the people can say that they are bilingual, because that too is on a continuum. I mean, I'm bilingual and I can speak, I'm BC and Deutsche , like very little . But according to some researchers that is quote unquote bilingual to an extent.

So all of the kids on my caseload are bilingual. And what's interesting is you, it unfortunately, a lot of the research shows that kids who have dyslexia will have a hard time learning another language. That's another, that's another thing for you to look out for. So I remember growing up, we had to take Spanish.

So if you have kids on your caseload that are really struggling in another language, that's another thing. If you just say, oh, okay, well that's a sign of dyslexia as well. I'm just gonna file that away and remember that. Um, [00:46:00] so one of my kids, I, we were reading aloud today, and the word was g o e s. Goes, but their home language is Danish and it's very similar to Geese

So when he was reading, he had to stop and say it to himself and think, because he was also reading at home a book in Danish. So when you're bilingual, the amount of exposure and how much you're using and reading and learning of each language really matters. So the fact that he was just reading a book in Danish and now he had a session with me and Danish was still very much on the brain when he was reading out loud.

He almost code mixed, if you will, goes for geese, which is amazing how the brain does that. And then he self-corrected. It. That's a, that's definitely part of the [00:47:00] feedback is you, I like to give them space to realize, wait, wait,

wait. That's not, that's not that word. I know what that word is, and he corrected it.

But it's so interesting to see the different role of being bilingual and how that can, um, affect and come into play in sessions and learning how to read. It's just definitely something you wanna keep in mind of your students' home language and what are they speaking at home? What are they reading and listening to?

Because if Kat and something else in Portuguese look the same, then that's going to be an expected misread there. So these are all of the different variables of, of language because we . that languages are bread and butter. So we know how these things interplay. We know how they interact and these are really important parts to to remember. But I just thought that story was really important to realize. [00:48:00] Oh, well that makes sense. If you were just reading a Danish book, so, yeah.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Yeah, that does make a lot of sense and it's, that's very important to just have in our mind, okay, this, this kid is bilingual and so if he makes he or she makes this error or that error that just, it's almost expected and then we can just work through it and, um, yeah. Have them, especially have them maybe realize it themselves.

Oh no, it's actually this word that's actually just brilliant on their part to be able to To do actually. So that's, that's really cool. And I love that you said that, that we are an important spot at the table. And I think before this I didn't think that I even really had a, I mean, maybe I could like be in the room with the dyslexia topic, but not quite at the table.

And now I really feel like no, like I really can be at the table, especially now that I really understand dyslexia and I really understand how important it is to have my ss l p eyes on all my kids to, to possibly, um, [00:49:00] re to possibly refer, um, for that early intervention. This is very important. And even while I'm doing therapy with kids that already have the diagnosis, how I can best serve my kids.

This, this is all so important. I'm really, really thankful you came today and told us all about this. Before we go though, I want, I wanna see if you have one last

closing statement or a pep talk, if you will, for our

Track 1: Oh my gosh. I'm all about pep talks. I felt like half

of my sorry, . Um, I I've, I really just want to reinforce. Your my, our confidence in our abilities as speech therapists and the vital role we play in helping kids with dyslexia. I know at times we can encounter resistance or skepticism from other professionals who may not fully grasp or understand the extent of our expertise, and that's okay.

They might say that speech therapists don't work with reading, but I say Don't back down. [00:50:00] We possess exceptional skills and in-depth knowledge and phonological awareness, all of which is a fundamental building block for reading and literacy, which is in turn intertwined in language, our bread and butter.

So when you do encounter that doubt or resistance . Stand firm in that expertise that you know you have trust in your training and your experience, and know that you can make a meaningful impact by having a seat at the literacy and dyslexia table 'cause you got this.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Awesome. Yes. And I feel like I do after this, dyslexia used to feel out of my realm, and now I feel like I know enough to, to be aware of those signs and to help a child. And also how to best work with a child on my caseload with dyslexia. Um, So if you follow me on Instagram, I often will post like a little short clip, or also the first, at every episode there's a little short clip. It's like everyone's little teaser, [00:51:00] and I'm just speaking through our episode. I'm like, what am I gonna use?

I feel like p pretty much everything you said, I'm just like, yes, that's so important. So I don't know. We'll see what I come up with. If you're listening to it, then it's already live and I've already chosen. So let's see what it is. But, um, , but I, I just feel like, yeah, the, like you said, a lot of this episode has been a great pep talk, and that's what I want, I want my episodes to be encouraging and to help SLPs help kids.

And that's exactly what, what my dream was for this podcast.

Track 1: Perfect. Hey.

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Thank you for listening. We hope you learned something today. All of the references and resources throughout the episode are listed in the show notes and also listed on the Pep Talk podcast for SLPs website. you want to learn more about Liz, make sure to check out her Instagram at the speech therapist. Ch I've been saying it at the , the speech therapist, , but it's just the speech therapist then with the ch on the end.

[00:52:00] Um, but I'll be tagging her and everything and you'll see it. But, um, that's her Instagram handle. She's, she shares a ton of helpful information and activities for

child development. Or, sorry, was that, was that

Track 1: Yeah, mine. It does say that on there. So,

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: I'm sure. Okay. Oh, okay. Okay. Um,

Sorry. Sometimes there's been a few times where I didn't like edit something right from the last one 'cause I use it as a template. Yeah. Okay. Um, but Yeah.

Liz, thank you again for

joining me here today.

Track 1: Oh M g. It was so fun. Thank you again

for

having me.

Let's do it again

michelle_1_09-12-2023_100852: Yes, definitely.