

Dotterer Dysgraphia Workshop

Description of Content

This workshop is companion to the book, ***Handwriting Brain-Body DisConnect*** written by the instructor. The purpose of the workshop is to become proficient in understanding the types of dysgraphia and strategies that can be used inclusively in the classroom to enhance the learning of all students. The program is built on the sensory-motor model for development.

DECODING Reading, Writing, and the Definition of Dysgraphia, Brain and Sensory-Motor Pathways, Vision, Memory, and Visual Memory

ENCODING Mechanical, Language, and Cognitive Dysgraphia

Decoding Reading, Writing, and the Definition of Dysgraphia

Emerging writers do not always translate what they see and hear to written expression well. Dysgraphia is defined by the IDA as “a condition of impaired letter writing by hand” or handwriting (Berninger & Wolf, 2018). In contrast, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fifth edition (DSM-5)* (APA, 2013) does not define dysgraphia as a specific identifiable diagnosis. It is mentioned as a symptom under the criterion of a Specific Learning Disability, Neurodevelopmental Disorders section. The Types of Dysgraphia is a method of explaining the developmental process and the neural glitches that occur.

Content will also review reading and writing, decoding, and encoding, typical development and explains the obstacles created by dyslexia. Reading is divided into five main categories: phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. Each of these categories has different subcategories.

We will also examine with the impact of writing. Decoding is the process of breaking things apart into syllables for example. Whereas the word encoding is a method of expressing the concept of taking information, storing it, and retrieving it to be used as new material. The process is like computer-based information storage. In education, it means handwriting. This section compares typical encoding and dysgraphia.

Decoding Brain and Sensory-Motor Pathways

The brain controls everything a person does, sees, and hears. The process of writing is divided into three parts. Handwriting is the mechanical part. This part of the process includes the letter formation, the location a letter is placed on the writing paper, and the neural pathway that is created in the process. Parts two and three are the language and cognitive portions. The language portion of the process is the development of sentence structure. This part contains the grammar, syntax, and basic skills in creating a sentence. The cognitive component is the final piece. It occurs after a child understands the basics of how to write letters and words to create sentences. Once a child can put all three pieces together, the neural pathways of creativity will form paragraphs and essays. This session provides an overview at the functions of the nervous system in terms that teachers and parents can comprehend.

Content will review the major areas of neural pathways impacting reading and writing. The brain and sensory-motor systems will be included.

Modules Five and Six: DECODING Vision, Memory, and Visual Memory

The visual system is the most prominent sensory system used to gather information from our senses in a classroom setting. Yes, the other senses can impact attention. However, keeping up with the teacher in a regular education classroom is 50% vision, 50% the rest of the sensory systems. Decoding the visual system begins with a brief explanation of eye anatomy and ocular motor function and how the information is interpreted by the brain. Content reviews different aspects of visual perceptual relationships and the integration of the motor and memory systems.

Module Seven: ENCODING Mechanical Dysgraphia

Content synchronizes sessions one, two, and three and teaches practical and functional applications to the classroom that do not add tasks for the teacher to perform but transform your teaching style. These ideas are alternative strategies to enhance your current curriculum. It will align the visual-spatial, motor, and memory strategies of dysgraphia with the classroom.

Module Eight: ENCODING Language Dysgraphia

Content aligns the language aspects of dysgraphia with the classroom. They can be easily taught to a parent of a child needing extra support. Specific strategies are shared for spelling and vocabulary. Teachers can build on these strategies across the curriculum. This session is rounded out by applying these strategies to learning support and special education needs for goals, accommodations, and modifications for specialty designed instruction.

Module Nine: ENCODING Cognitive Dysgraphia

Content will bring the final aspects of dysgraphia together and aligns it with classroom strategies. It's time to begin implementing your action plan. Breakout time is provided to process and plan projects considered throughout the day.

Workshop is 5.5 hours

This workshop aligns with the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) for educators:

13.1011 Education/Teaching of Individuals with Specific Learning Disabilities.

Definition: A program that focuses on the design of educational services for children or adults with specific learning disabilities which adversely affect their educational performance and that may prepare individuals to teach such students. Includes instruction in identifying students with specific learning disabilities, developing individual education plans, teaching, and supervising students with specific learning disabilities, counseling, and applicable laws and policies.

13.1001 Special Education and Teaching, General.

Definition: A general program that focuses on the design and provision of teaching and other educational services to children or adults with special learning needs or disabilities, and that may prepare individuals to function as special education teachers in a collaborative or team environment. Includes instruction in diagnosing learning disabilities, developing individual education plans, teaching and supervising special education students, special education counseling, and applicable laws and policies.

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/cipcode>

This workshop aligns with National Board Certification of Occupational Therapy (NBCOT) Renewal Activities Chart:

NBCOT #11 Independent learning with assessment component (e.g., **online courses**, CE articles, self-study series, etc.).

1 hour = 1 unit 36 units maximum per three-year cycle

Certificate of completion verifying contact hours or CEU.

https://www.miota.org/docs/nbcot_pdu_chart.pdf

Measurable Learning Objectives

Participants will

1. Delineate dysgraphia from dyslexia and dyscalculia using the definition of a Specific Learning Disability in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders, fifth edition* in the general education classroom.
2. Remediate dysgraphia through formative assessment or progress monitoring to observe improved handwriting skills.
3. Construct an intervention strategy that impacts whole classroom, small group, or 1:1 instruction and benefits all students.
4. Synthesize the neural pathway connections for written expression and how they apply to spelling, sentences, and paragraphs.

Credentials

Cheri is an international speaker, author, and consultant who equips educators and therapists to help students succeed in school by overcoming the social-emotional trauma of illegible handwriting and dysgraphia. Her book, *Handwriting Brain-Body DisConnect*, has remained in the Top 100 on Amazon since publication in Handwriting Reference and Learning Disabilities. It was also a Top 10 Finalist in the Author Academy Awards in 2019. Being an occupational therapist for 25 years, she has worked in many concentration areas. However, it wasn't until starting her private practice that she found her passion. She has been an adjunct instructor at Penn State, Alvernia, and Misericordia Universities and has guest lectured at several other colleges. She lives with her husband of 31 years. They have two adult children. She believes that understanding dysgraphia is essential to student success.