Inclusive Instruction for LLA! (All, that is)

By Joi Bostic

Why do we go through the trouble of perhaps designing classes and teaching classes? We all want for the attendees to engage, participate and understand. Did you know that the mere way you put your presentation together may cause students to fill left out and ignored? To be effective in teaching, we must attempt to include every student regardless of their skills or abilities.

Recently Rusty Willis shared with me a simple way to present class material in a way to make it easier for students living with dyslexia, ADD, or ADHD to understand and participate. The suggestion is to utilize dyslexic-friendly fonts.

After an intensive search, the best suited font was located. Now you can download it free and integrate into your presentations. Click here to access the page for the font OpenDyslexic. Download the format for your operating system.

Below are more tips on how to make your presentation more friendly to those living with dyslexia, ADD, or ADHD.

Slide Fonts

- Instead of OpenDyslexic, simple sans serif fonts can be used. These include Arial, Calibri, Franklin Gothic Book, Lucida Sans, Segoe UI, Tahoma, and Verdana

- Insert adequate spacing between letters
- Font size should be at least 18-point up to 32-point
- Use of fonts should be consistent
- Emphasize text with bold instead of highlighting, underlining or italicizing
- Align text to the left or centrally instead of justifying both sides
- Avoid using angled fonts or special effects such as shadows

Slide Content

For easier readability:

- Limit the number of lines on each slide to 7
- Limit the number of words on each line to 6
- Leave plenty of space above and below each line
- Leave some space in your slides
- Avoid red and green and other color combinations that may cause visual stress
- Cover one topic per slide
- Avoid adding too much text on a slide
- Use animation to reveal content a little at a time
- Use speaker notes for more in-depth information to share

Layout and Design

▷ Background

- Use an off-white or cream background with dark text. Bright white slide backgrounds makes text harder to read
- Can use a dark background and white text which is easier on some eyes
- Dark blue text on cream background works well for those living with dyslexia
- Include lots of space around the letters
- Avoid backgrounds with patterns

▷ Images

- Use images to break up blocks of text and make the slides easier to scan
- Avoid placing text over images

▷ Layout and Effects

- Keep slides clear, simple and uncrowded
- Use animation to reveal content a little at a time
- Avoid complex visual effects such as moving, flashing or dissolving images
- Use consistent slide transitions

Environment

- Dim the lighting to reduce glare

- Leave slides up long enough for students to read and process the content

- Utilize multi-sensory tools such as audio or video to reinforce information

NOTE: In case you were wondering, this article is completely in OpenDyslexic.

With these tips, you should find that your presentations are better received by all students.