

“Lexia’s Reading S.O.S. gives students a new level of comfort with a computer and a sense of control over their own learning and achievement.”

BACKGROUND

Hattie is not a “young adult;” she is in her middle fifties. She was born in Ireland and immigrated to this country in 1960. She says, “Gaelic was my first language, but that is not the reason why I have had such difficulty with English. Even as a child, I couldn’t learn to read. I knew that I wasn’t learning right. Because I wasn’t learning, and I was one of nine kids, my parents took me out of school to help out at home. I didn’t even mind. I knew I couldn’t be successful in school.”

When she first came to America, Hattie worked as a nanny. She also worked as a cook and a home health aide for many years. After meeting and marrying her husband, she raised four children. Her husband, who is a high school graduate, has worked for a supermarket chain for the past thirty-three years.

For Hattie, her children’s education was of primary importance. Whenever possible she would hire her own kids to work on weekends as home health aides to help them save money for college. She was always worried that one or more of them would be born with “her learning problem”. In fact, her second child, Kathy, was diagnosed as a dyslexic in the second grade. Hattie advocated strongly and intelligently for her child, who was tested and assigned an educational plan. Today, Kathy is a successful sales representative for a pharmaceutical company. Her oldest child, a son, went to college at night for sixteen years in order to graduate. Now, all of Hattie’s children are educated and have careers.

After spending many years working to get her children through school, it was Hattie’s turn to learn to read.

THE FIT

Hattie was referred to the Adult Learning Center in Hull. The Center is part of the MA Dept. of Education’s five YALD programs, designed to educate Young Adults with Learning Disabilities. The reading program consists of the Lexia Learning System S.O.S. software in conjunction with the Wilson reading program. She attends classes for two half-days per week from 11:15 - 3:30. She first works with her tutor on the Wilson program, and then with her teacher Rita Brutto on phonics, math, and history. Lastly, she works on **Lexia Learning System’s S.O.S.** software. Due to her severe dyslexia, she had not been able to learn to read. She has difficulty distinguishing between sounds. Concerning this lack of phonemic awareness she says, “I don’t pronounce sounds right. I need to hear them over and over again. Using the software allows me to listen and practice the sounds on my own. I can make corrections by myself. I can work independently, and I can see my own progress.”

“Hattie is the reason why we ever get into this work, why we want to be teachers. She’s a delight!” says Bob Verrochi, director of the Adult Learning Center in Hull, MA.

Bob Verrochi believes that the Lexia Learning System S.O.S. software is a perfect fit with the reading programs at the Adult Learning Center. It allows each student to work one-on-one with the teacher while the rest of the group is engaged in activities that reinforce the lesson on the computer. Lexia’s S.O.S. provides excellent practice for those students who need constant repetition in order to learn. It offers various levels of activities, depending on student need and correlating with the class lesson of the day. Additionally, it gives students a new level of comfort with a computer and a sense of control over their own learning and achievement.

THE RESULTS

Hattie believes that the Lexia System S.O.S. software has helped her reach her goal. “Now, after all these years, I can read. I really can’t believe it. I look at myself and I can’t believe it’s me. I had so much shame. I hid it, that I couldn’t read. I didn’t let people know. Now I feel freedom.”

By Elaine Dohan