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Feb. 29, 2016

To Those Who are Voting on Senate Bill 317,

My name is Dr. Darla Shaw and I am an education professor at WCSU. I have been teaching full time for 59 years, at all levels. I presently prepare students to go into the classroom and teaching reading and to pass the Reading Foundations test.

There is no way that you can deal effectively with the huge problem of dyslexia with only one class. If you are going to make teachers really proficient in helping students with special needs, the following changes need to be made.

Start with the basic course in dyslexia to help teachers understand the problem, the assessment, and various components.

Then with every course that these students take, dyslexia should be a component. As a classroom teacher today we have to address differentiated learning constantly. This would be much the same. In every class, certain strategies would be designated to help the dyslexic students.

There should also be an integrated course in the arts and dyslexia as so many dyslexic students are artistic, musical, mathematical, movement oriented and need hands on opportunities and constant repetition. The humanities is one of the best ways to bridge the application gap with dyslexic students.

A strong clinical component with individual or small groups of dyslexic students should also be added to the certification component. This clinical would constantly be addressing assessment, application of various multisensory, explicit strategies, reflection, and reassessment, etc.

It is so much easier to just tack on a dyslexia based course and say that the problem has been addressed. Teaching dyslexic takes a whole different mind-set and total retraining of teachers. Dyslexia has been put on the back burner for too long and the problem is much larger than we previously taught. It is a problem that can cause a life time of problems and can't be fixed by a test (that is a vocabulary test of facts) and an overview of dyslexia with no real application and clinical component.

Dr. Darla Shaw, professor of education.