

The following document (an English assignment) is written by a senior high school student who was diagnosed with dyslexia at the end of second grade.

English 161

6/30/11

Two Teachers That Changed My Life

Imagine as a first grader walking into a classroom where you are capable of understanding what everyone is speaking. You have a better grasp of the spoken language than most of your classmates, but the teacher is writing with symbols that everyone but you can understand. I would expect that you would feel unintelligent, alone, and frustrated. This is exactly how I felt for my first two years of public schooling. I was a very poor student and therefore I was placed into the learning support program. In the learning support classroom I met two teachers, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones, who would become two of the biggest influences in my life. I entered into their class a disheartened little kid and later left with a newfound confidence, positive outlook on life, and good self-esteem.

As a small child, I struggled with written language. I couldn't quite figure out how all of the symbols could somehow come together to form coherent words and sentences. I sat in class confused while all of my fellow students picked up reading quickly. I would look around at my fellow classmates who didn't seem any smarter than me, and was frustrated that they could put spoken words to the indecipherable symbols. I was incapable of such great feats. During class reading I would pretend to follow along, and if I were called upon to read, I would respond, "Sorry, I lost my place." To a self-conscious seven-year-old, these incidents were embarrassing and demoralizing.

Luckily my parents and second grade teacher recognized that I was struggling and needed to be placed into the remedial reading class. By the third grade I was placed into the learning support classroom. This was a major turning point in my learning career. In that class I met Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones. They are two of the most kind, understanding, and caring people that I have ever met. They cared for each of their students as if they were their own children. They took each student and did everything in their power to turn them into successful students, even if they had to bend over backwards to do so.

I can remember on many separate occasions when they went out of their way to help me. They always put the extra effort to make learning fun for even the most stubborn student. They brought in candy, invented learning games, and planned fieldtrips. To help me learn cursive writing, Mrs. Smith brought in a box of sand so that I could practice writing letters in it. This is just one of the many ways they they made learning into a fun activity.

They were also very uplifting people, always making me feel good about myself. They both had positive and energetic attitudes that seemed to rub off on their students and those around them. They helped with my self-confidence. They complimented me frequently, told me how much I was improving, and convinced me that I was intelligent. When I became a certified SCUBA diver at age ten, they decorated a whole bulletin board to celebrate my accomplishment. To think of myself in this new light was very empowering and my self-esteem was boosted to greater heights.

As the year went on, my grades and attitude steadily improved because of the dedicated efforts of these two teachers. Instead of waking up in the morning dreading the school day and the challenges it would bring, I woke up and looked forward to learning in Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones' class. I became less self-conscious and more confident about life. By the end of the year, I was a completely different student. I was reading at grade level, writing at grade level, but most importantly, I was having fun in the process.

At the beginning of first grade I never thought that I would ever be able to read. I entered school timid, afraid, and defeated. By the end of elementary school I was a whole new student. Now I'm eighteen years old, college bound, and I have a bright future ahead of me. This is a far cry from where I started just twelve years ago. I can't help but think where I would be if it wasn't for Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Jones. Not only did they teach me to read and write, but they taught me how to enjoy learning.