

Extracts taken from the conclusion of a case study completed by Lisa Kilgariff of the University of Sunderland as part of a Post Graduate Certificate in Education (Masters Level). The study took place between September and December 2014 at Lockerbie College, Barbados.

**How effective are small (1-4 student) group targeted skills classes (such as spelling, comprehension, language, vocabulary and phonics classes) and the use of integrated scaffolding in improving reading skills among secondary level students with dyslexic difficulties?**

“Due to the flexible nature of scheduling at the school, in accordance with local policy development (UNESCO, 2008, p. 14-17), students have the option to have at least two hours of additional specific support classes, as well as their usual four hours of English classes. This means that all students with dyslexic difficulties are working on English language and literature tasks for a minimum of six hours a week, far beyond the time Wanzek & Roberts were able to procure.” (14)

“Providing students with the additional support in the form of scaffolded classes and additional specific task classes seems to act as this “lifeline”, helping students through their transition smoothly and preventing students from continuing to fall behind their peers.” (15)

“Observations in the current study have also made it clear that in classes where students worked on individual skills independent of others, students are more focused and are very dedicated to improving their skills.” (15)

“It would be a mistake to not take a step back from exam results and classroom marks and take into consideration these comments from teachers and observations: students with dyslexic difficulties who are given a chance to operate without being graded on their weaknesses (in this case, typically encoding and decoding letters and sounds) become more confident and engaged in school. This appears to have a marked effect on their attitudes towards learning which could be a significant factor in the student improvements observed in the course of this case study. It could be concluded that separating classes into skills, while having a significant effect on student progress, is not operating entirely independently.” (16)

“In one interview, the teacher stated this has a significant positive effect on levels of student participation, confidence and success in the class as they feel prepared to take on the more complex integrated work. Scaffolding the classes and providing additional specific skills classes seems to have supplied students with coping strategies such as those outlined by Firth, Frydenburg, Steeg & Bond (2013).” (16)

“It is clear that small targeted skills classes, alongside the use of scaffolding in integrated classes, are highly effective at improving reading skills, as well as improving overall confidence, among secondary level students with dyslexic difficulties.” (16)