

## **Syllabus – Reading Improvement**

Teacher: J.D. Aguirre

**Reading Improvement** is the dyslexia support class for newly-identified dyslexic students. The students are identified for dyslexia and then placed in the class. This class counts for an elective credit, but students do not “choose” to be placed into it. They arrive after it has been determined that they have learning difficulties due specifically to dyslexia or related learning difficulties.

**Reading Improvement** uses a curriculum called **BLS (Basic Language Skills)** which uses a *multisensory approach* to teach phonics and phonological awareness to students with dyslexia. The class helps to “retrain the brain” by providing **guidance in learning language structures** and **commonalities across language** as it concerns reading. Here, “**learning language structures**” is defined as getting the students to recognize and apply the most common patterns that occur linguistically in the reading of English, such as when vowels are long or short, or how sounds and meaning change in a word when certain combinations of vowels and consonants occur together. Student are taught how to decode printed words and make meaning of them.

The approach is that before a dyslexic student can comprehend the meaning of a piece of text, he or she must first be able to distinguish the individual words (i.e. the difference between “explore” and “explode,” or to be able to instantly recognize that affixes are being applied to a word and how that changes meaning). The “retrain the brain” part comes from doing exercises and repetitions in order to make these skills (which a “non-dyslexic” student does automatically, but a dyslexic student cannot) become automatic for the dyslexic student, in a way that makes sense to the dyslexic brain, since the traditional methods of teaching reading do not work for a dyslexic brain; hence, the difficulties that dyslexic students typically have with reading and understanding.

**Class pacing** is determined by the pace that a given group of students is able to proceed. As the student learn different concepts, we proceed to the next concept, in the sequential order laid out by BLS.

**Reading Improvement grades** are based on a 40/60 breakdown. 40% for classwork/daily activities, quizzes. 60% for skills tests.