

Dear Senators Campion, Lyons and Perchlik,

Senator Perchlik asked a question about labeling students with a diagnosis (like dyslexia). Is labeling harmful? Think about your own school experience. Did you know who read well and who struggled? Labeling IS happening, often in the form of struggling readers avoiding situations like reading aloud and teasing by peers.

In Vermonter [Lida Winfield](#)'s dance "In Search of Air: Growing Up Dyslexic", she says, "I'd rather feel anger, sad, heartbroken or anxious rather than the isolation and hopelessness of feeling dumb". Please see the first 1:35 minutes of the video:

<https://vimeo.com/113412865>

Lida also talks about her frustration and anger at not being able to read and her high school graduation in her TED talk. Please watch her dance between the times of 2:15 to 3:55 in this video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oilizJq-HLw&feature=emb_logo

In my teaching and tutoring experiences over several decades, students (and their families) are relieved to know their problem has a name, like dyslexia or Specific Learning Disability, and that teaching methods exist that can help. The student now has an understanding of why learning to read has been such a struggle.

Assessments reveal weaknesses as well as strengths to build on. A good diagnosis comes with recommendations for appropriate instructional methods and access to assistive technology like free audio books from the Library of Congress ("books on tape").

This is similar to fearing symptoms of an illness. Once one has a diagnosis, the problem is defined with solutions to try and treatment begins. The diagnosis brings understanding and relief. Are we NOT going to give children glasses because they will be labeled as "four eyes"?

S.75 will help catch children early so help can start before self esteem is damaged, and while remediation is easier and less expensive.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Cindy Gardner-Morse, M.Ed.
Literacy Tutor