



THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON DYSLEXIA TRAINING AND TREATMENT

Case Study

Dyslexia Training Institute: How Two Women With Young Children Are Changing Dyslexia Training

This case study is for:

- ✓ Independent Practitioners / Private Practice
- ✓ Women Owned Small Business
- ✓ Medical Trainers and Consultants
- ✓ 100% Online Conferences, Courses, and Workshops

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INTRODUCTION AND SITUATION BACKGROUND

Charles Schwab, Jay Leno, Whoopi Goldberg, Tom Cruise, Alexander Graham Bell. Five well-known figures with extraordinary talents. What do they have in common?

One thing is that they are five of the estimated 15 percent of Americans who have to contend with a learning disorder called Dyslexia.



Dr. Kelli Sandman-Hurley, Co-founder
Dyslexia Training Institute

Dyslexia is a reading disability, and as with other disabilities, it is a lifelong challenge that begins at birth. Because it is a language processing disorder, it can hinder reading, spelling, writing, and even speaking. If left untreated, Dyslexia can affect important aspects of a person's life personally and professionally.

Some consider Dyslexia a gift, because it brings with it different "out-of-the-box" ways of thinking and problem solving, as evidenced by the five innovators and celebrities listed above. But for most people, it's a struggle that impacts their self-image, educational progress, and career growth.



Tracy Block-Zaretsky, Co-founder
Dyslexia Training Institute

While Dyslexia isn't rare, only five percent of the estimated 43.5 million Americans with this learning disability are properly diagnosed in order to receive the help they need.

But in 2008, two young professional women in San Diego, California, found themselves working together as literacy coordinators in an Adult Literacy program at a local library. Committed as they were to their clients, they recognized that the underlying problem with adult literacy was that *children* with Dyslexia were not being identified and helped early enough. So Dr. Kelli Sandman-Hurley and Tracy Block-Zaretsky founded the Dyslexia Training Institute (DTI) to address some of the gaps in the dyslexia training available to educators living on the west coast of the United States.

Very quickly, however, they discovered that the need for effective dyslexia training was far greater than they had imagined. In fact, training was needed not only for educators, but also for reading therapists and even family members of those with Dyslexia.

And the need wasn't only on the West Coast, but spanned all across the U.S. and even the world.



KEY CHALLENGES – Personal and Professional

At the time the Institute was launched, both Hurley and Zaretsky were also new mothers who could not consider extensive travel to serve the mission that so inspired them. The puzzle they faced was clear: **how could they work from home and yet reach any geographic location at times convenient for professional students? Moreover, how could they nurture the peer-to-peer support systems they found to be so important in their work?**

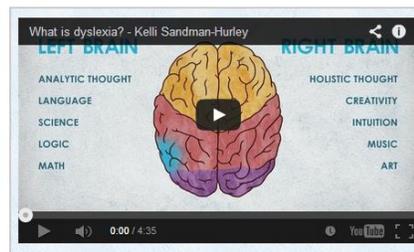
SOLUTION

Once they defined the puzzle, the solution came quickly. Hurley and Zaretsky learned about iCohere, an online classroom platform that fosters community-building and engages participants with instructors and fellow students. They realized that DTI could expand its geographical outreach without compromising the sense of community and interaction among its trainees. And without either of them having to travel! **Their new goal took form: to use an internet-based platform to create an online campus so they could realize their professional goals without sacrificing their personal commitments.**

Their development plan included:

- Identifying curriculum and training needs of professionals
- Developing the course curriculum, training materials and online strategy
- Selecting the proper online platform to address the unique program needs
- Identifying the target audience and marketing the program through key marketing outlets
- Advancing the program to include certification training and graduate level extension credits

The development process began with preparing material and addressing the design of the service offering. Considerations included identifying an optimal course schedule and season, the length of the courses, class size, instructors, and selecting supportive digital channels that would integrate with the curriculum, such as videos, recordings, and presentations.





Hurley and Zaretsky had experience attending and providing online education classes, and understood the value and impact that a combination of live meetings, always-available discussion boards, and a secure resource center could have on their training model.

After careful consideration and research, the team implemented the iCohere Unified Learning platform and began operations as an online business.

PROGRAM MARKETING & BRANDING

The Institute’s branding would be key to its success. The branding highlights the educational benefits of the training, the educational and real world experience of the instructors, the high-quality materials used in the program, and the many benefits that an online program offers that are not available in a traditional classroom setting.



iCohere Features	Key Dyslexia Program Benefits
Integrated Course Content	Broad range of high quality content contributes to deeper learning.
Recorded Program Archives and Resource Center	Improves student success rates by providing ongoing access to course material.
Virtual Classrooms	Allows close interaction between instructors and students. Students have better opportunities to ask questions and receive answers.
Discussion Boards and Live Text Chat	Provides two-way communication between instructors and students to increase learning opportunities.
Peer Learning Community	Students can network with each other and instructors.
Video Streaming and Classrooms	Allows students to practice the behavior in a real or simulated fashion.



There is a misconception that online courses are taken in isolation and involve reading an extensive amount of material with little or no interaction with instructors. To offset this misconception, the marketing strategy focused on giving prospective students tastes of the DTI online classroom experience. Sample training videos, webinars, an industry blog, a video simulation, and documents were made available to students to demonstrate the level of training they would receive and answer frequently asked questions about the course and the virtual classroom.

Participant Quote: "This was my first online class since leaving college. I learned so much it was amazing and the class was so easy to navigate."

RESULTS

Today, just a few years after its founding, the Dyslexia Training Institute reaches a global audience. The services have expanded to provide not only training for educators and health care professionals, but also a variety of courses for parents, including how to navigate the educational system by understanding Special Educational Law.

**ATTENDANCE HAS GROWN OVER 430%
SINCE THE ONLINE PROGRAM LAUNCHED IN 2012**

"While the initial goal was to give teachers living on the west coast of the U.S. access to high quality training, we've actually reached a much broader audience. The need for quality training is far greater than we imagined. We now have an international presence and have welcomed students from Peru, Pakistan, India, Australia, Belize, Nigeria and several other countries in Africa."

Dr. Kelli Sandman-Hurley





ABOUT ICOHERE

With offices in Washington, D.C. and Walnut Creek, California, iCohere has been bringing full-service technology solutions to small, medium and large associations, nonprofits, and government agencies since 2001. Our cloud-based Unified Learning System supports all varieties of courses, hybrid and all-virtual conferences, online communities, webinars and other professional development programs.

Our goal is to help you successfully meet your goals, whether it is generating revenue, amplifying your member services, or expanding your organization's outreach. iCohere offers training and support through every step of the planning, configuration, and execution process, ensuring that our clients optimize their experience with iCohere's feature-rich platform.

iCohere's products are available on the GSA IT-70 and AIMS 541 schedules.

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For more information and a free consultation on how iCohere can help you realize your goals, please contact Lance A. Simon, CGMP CVEP
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