



### Sandy's Story Overcoming Dyslexia at Last



#### *Sandy*

Age: 75

Location: WA

Diagnosis: Dyslexia



#### **Protocol**

Sandy worked for 50 minutes per day, 5 days per week, for 6 months. She completed Fast ForWord Literacy, Literacy Advanced, and Reading 3-5. Sandy also participated in the Reading Assistant Program.



#### **Results**

Sandy, a self-described *nonreader* for most of her life, spent 6 months with Gemm Learning. When she completed her program, she not only considered herself a reader – she found reading enjoyable.

For most of her life, Sandy was only able to read at a 4<sup>th</sup> grade level. She considered herself “almost a nonreader” as a result. She didn’t enjoy reading, though she always worked hard at it. She sought alternative activities where extensive reading wasn’t a necessity. Sandy earned a degree in home economics and ran her own successful business for over 30 years.

Sandy was diagnosed with dyslexia in her thirties. After she retired, she began to think more and more about reading during her spare time and decided to address the problem head on. She started with a well-known school for dyslexia, attending for three months. But between the long commute and her concern that the program wasn’t set up for adults, she eventually decided that it just wasn’t working. This led her to Gemm Learning.

Sandy found the flexibility of being able to work from home on her own schedule appealing and signed up for our six month adult special. She was initially discouraged during the cognitive exercises, because she couldn’t understand how listening to different sounds would improve her reading. She credits the constant reminders from staff to “hang in there” and that “there’s a reason for all this” for motivating her to continue.

*My husband is so proud,” she said. “He just can’t believe after all these years, I’m doing this - because he’s been reading to me for the last 35 years.”*

As time went on, Sandy began to see the program’s impact, and often completed extra sessions out of an eagerness to master specific objectives. She also called or emailed our staff whenever she had a question about strategies, vocabulary, or grammar rules as the material became more challenging. Within six months’ time, her fluency and comprehension had improved substantially.

Sandy got her first library card right after completing her program. She considers reading fun now and alternates between checking out books at the library and selecting them on her iPad (where she enjoys the option to adjust the print size). “My husband is so proud,” she said. “He just can’t believe after all these years, I’m doing this - because he’s been reading to me for the last 35 years.” Sandy says that now she will read to her husband from articles or other things she finds interesting, and he just smiles.