

## **The Impact of Digital Literacy on One Child**

Dyslexia: A Student's Success Story

*By Darla Hatton*

As a mother you know when something isn't right with your child. As a mother with familial propensity for reading difficulties, I knew that my preschool daughter was struggling. My daughter's name is Kaila. Kaila is also dyslexic.

Kaila was officially diagnosed in third grade and in fourth grade she qualified for a 504 plan. After connecting with another colleague, I reviewed the paperwork and in fifth grade Kaila received an account with Bookshare.

I viewed the video webinars provided by Kurzweil and taught Kaila how to use the program. We demonstrated that Kurzweil assisted Kaila in reaching the goals established by Florida's Sunshine State Standards for her grade and specifically how it would help her. She was provided a copy of the program and it was written into her 504 plan.

For Kaila, her dyslexia expresses itself in the areas of decoding and fluency in addition to having difficulty with tracking, spelling and the mechanics of writing. She uses both audio and e-text for different purposes.

Kaila really started to flourish as a competent reader when she used her E-text obtained with Bookshare with Kurzweil 3000. The e-text version allows highlighting and extraction of key passages or terminology to make an outline or vocabulary list. When completing homework, the e-text versions allow Kaila to easily look up words and have the definition read to her. This helps her increase her vocabulary. With e-text books and Kurzweil 3000, Kaila can add additional electronic sticky notes or recorded voice notes regarding assignment's due dates – which helps her stay organized.

Kaila makes mp3 audio files out of e-text files obtained from Bookshare using Kurzweil 3000 -- which converts only selected text to an mp3 audio file using synthesized text-to-speech. This mp3 file can then be easily downloaded into her portable mp3 player or cell phone memory card. In her back pocket with ear-bud speakers, the assistive technology is hardly noticeable. Kids usually assume she is listening to music while she is reading.

Kaila is 14 and will be entering 9th grade. She is in public school and attends general ed classes. She is interested in becoming a veterinarian and I imagine Kurzweil will greatly assist her in keeping pace with the reading requirements for her Biology AP classes.

The combination of Bookshare files and Kurzweil 3000 has improved Kaila's self esteem and has empowered her to become a more independent learner.

### **About Darla Hatton**

**As a presenter on reading and assistive technologies and a certified reading specialist Ms. Hatton created the web site [www.DyslexiaFacts.Net](http://www.DyslexiaFacts.Net) after misinformation delayed Kaila from receiving proper early interventions.**