In preschool, at a time when they demonstrated their knowledge and reasoning skills differently than other children. This was made more evident in Halloran’s case, as he believed she had dyslexia. She couldn’t get them out of her mind and was determined to help children with dyslexia. The twins might be dyslexic. She wasn’t sure, but she thought the twins might be dyslexic. She couldn’t get them out of her mind and decided to help kids who had dyslexia.

Last spring, Turk signed up for a new dyslexia-endorsement program at Georgia College. She had earned her bachelor’s degree in business administration in 1997 at Georgia College; her master’s in special education in 2008; and her doctorate degree in curriculum and educational leadership in 2011 and 17. But as an entrepreneur, she is in her knowledge of teaching, Turk said her understanding of dyslexia was growing. She wasn’t sure how to identify and meet their specific needs.

Nine new programs have been offered in the spring to early childhood programs to detect signs of dyslexia as early as kindergarten. The university has more than $5 million for a list of approved statewide screening assessments. Then two things happened. In March 2023, state legislators passed HB 1487, Georgia’s Early Literacy Act (EFLA). It prioritized the detection and remediation of dyslexia in children and youth. It called for teachers to be trained in “structured literacy, knowledge of the science of reading,” and higher-qualified educational technicians. And across the state, 20 higher-ed institutions and Regional Service Education Agencies (RSEAs), previously approved by the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (GaPSC), to offer dyslexia-endorsement programs for K-12 teachers, received funding from the Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) to increase awareness and support for children with reading difficulties. These developments led to the creation of Georgia College’s dyslexia endorsement program and an early childhood program to increase early and effective interventions for students who had reading difficulties.

As many as 20 percent of the U.S. population—on average in five people—display mild or more severe signs of dyslexia, a neuro-cognitive disorder. According to the National Institute of Health (NIH), in addition, 27 percent of fourth graders in the United States score below basic reading levels, according to the National Reading Report Card issued in 2022 by the National Institute of Education. Helping students with things like expressive language, phonological awareness and word decoding increases self-confidence. A native French speaker from Georgia, Turk wasn’t qualified to speak medical French, so she decided to enroll in a new language program. “That was one of my favorite nursing days ever. I figured it would help, but I didn’t just get to talk to a patient, but I got to talk to a patient who spoke another language.”

Immediately Halloran’s patient relaxed with a smile. When she graduated from her nursing cohort in 2011, she had jumped at the chance to sign up. “I think we’re also unique in the sense that this is for graduate credit. It’s important for a lot of our teachers. Collectively, she said, “we’re working with educators across the state to make a difference.”

“Now we’re done with treatment and not receiving the best care she could. But when she graduated, Clara Halloran, earned the name of a championship nurse. “I want to be a knowledgeable nurse, I want to be an advocate nurse,” she said. “But above all, I want to be a compassionate nurse.”

When she graduated from her nursing cohort in December, Halloran completed two minors: French and women and gender studies. Originally, she pursued French after taking it at Lassiter High School. As she explored the language at Georgia College & State University, she learned how the values of the world cultures, and this impacted on her. “I want to encourage my nurse, especially nursing students, to pursue a language even if it’s just a few courses,” Halloran said. “I think being able to communicate with patients in their first language, making their additional effort to make them feel comfortable and care can make such a difference in a patient’s care.”

“Anyway that you’re going to work, you’re going to encounter a variety of languages and a variety of cultures,” she said. “Being well-versed in how to recognize those cultures, and how to approach them and appreciate them, it’s going to improve the level of compassion and empathy you can give those patients.”

After graduation, Halloran will work as a program assistant at Northside Hospital Gwinnett. She was confused, unreceptive to treatment and not receiving the best care she could. But when she graduated, Clara Halloran, earned the name of a championship nurse. “I want to be a knowledgeable nurse, I want to be an advocate nurse,” she said. “But above all, I want to be a compassionate nurse.”

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