Understood Quick Insights Series

Through My Eyes: Understanding through storytelling

Seventy million people in the United States have learning and thinking differences, like dyslexia and ADHD. But the world isn't set up for them to thrive.

Learning and thinking differences are lifelong. Understood.org supports people at key moments in their lives with our expert-vetted resources. We're constantly creating new products and content to meet the different needs of our audiences. One such offering is Through My Eyes.

Through My Eyes is an immersive platform that uses the power of storytelling to show the real lives of kids with learning and thinking differences.

It also has supplementary resources that leverage best practices of social-emotional learning. Students, educators, and families can use these resources in the classroom and at home.

In 2025, we conducted an online evaluation study with 307 parents and educators. Our goal was to find out how *Through My Eyes* can affect understanding about learning and thinking differences. We also wanted to know if *Through My Eyes* could increase empathy and advocacy.

Why storytelling?

- Storytelling can be a powerful tool. First-person stories highlighting lived experience can foster empathy, reduce stigma, and promote inclusion.
- Stories can activate empathy. Seeing, hearing, or reading a story all help people understand the feelings and experiences of others.
- Empathy is one of the core drivers of prosocial behavior. It motivates helping, sharing, and cooperation. These are essential to social bonding and group resilience.

Key insights

We surveyed 154 parents and 153 educators after they had used Through My Eyes. Here's what we learned.

They felt more informed and more confident speaking about learning and thinking differences.

- **35%** of of parents and educators felt more informed about learning and thinking differences.
- **37%** of parents and educators felt more confident speaking about learning and thinking differences.

They increased their knowledge of ADHD or dyslexia.

- **47%** of parents increased their knowledge of ADHD.
- **46%** of educators increased their knowledge of ADHD.
- **43%** of parents increased their knowledge of dyslexia.

They experienced a positive shift in their attitudes and perceptions of learning and thinking differences.

- **50%** of parents and educators more strongly believed that learning and thinking differences can lead to positive gains, like personal growth.
- **50%** of parents and educators felt more empathy for individuals with learning and thinking differences.
- **46%** of parents and educators wanted to do more to advocate for individuals with learning and thinking differences.

They found the resources effectively addressed their needs.

- **8 out of 10** parents and educators found the downloadable resources were effective in meeting their needs to support individuals with learning and thinking differences.
- **3 out of 4** parents felt the downloadable resources were effective in meeting their needs to support communication — with their child or co-parent — about learning and thinking differences.
- **8 out of 10** educators said the professional development resource was effective in meeting their needs to support kids with learning and thinking differences.
- **9 out of 10** educators said the downloadable middle school lesson plan was effective in meeting their needs to support kids with learning and thinking differences.

Implications

These findings show that *Through My Eyes* can shift perspectives of learning and thinking differences by increasing understanding, reducing misconceptions, and instilling empathy. By focusing on lived experience through storytelling, we allow people to see ADHD, dyslexia, and dyscalculia differently, so they can act differently.

On the research side, we'll be publishing more of our insights and results from additional phases of this study. Stay tuned!

Connect with us

We're always looking to collaborate and partner with others on our research. Reach out to our team at **evaluation@understood.org** to learn more.

Methodology: This survey was conducted online within the United States by Understood.org from August 6 to September 3, 2025, among two sample groups: 154 parents of children 18 years or younger who live with their parents at least part-time and 153 educators in K–12 classrooms. All data presented here have a confidence level of 95%.

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