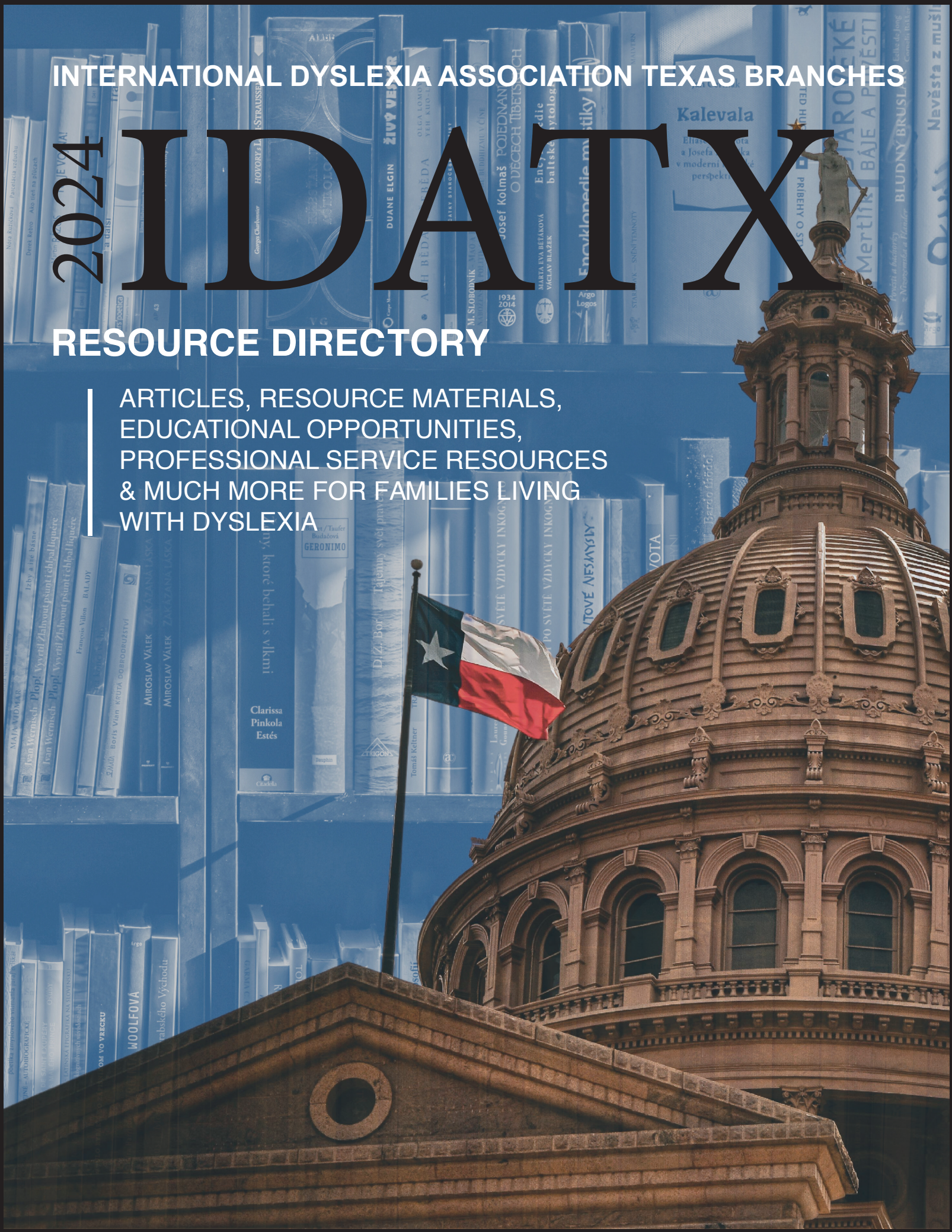
INTERNATIONAL DYSLEXIA ASSOCIATION TEXAS BRANCHES

2024 IDATX

RESOURCE DIRECTORY

ARTICLES, RESOURCE MATERIALS,
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES,
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE RESOURCES
& MUCH MORE FOR FAMILIES LIVING
WITH DYSLEXIA



Rawson Saunders is dedicated to providing the extraordinary education dyslexic learners deserve and to training educators to develop the full potential of each and every dyslexic student. To learn more about our award-winning school and teacher training center—where we offer in-person or remote training opportunities—visit **rawsonsaunders.org**.

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Where Dyslexic Means Extraordinary

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FROM *THE* PRESIDENTS...

Hello DyslexiaCon24 Participants,

The IDA Texas Branches are excited to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the International Dyslexia Association annual conference with you! As we pause to appreciate the long history of the International Dyslexia Association and the impact that the annual conferences have had on students, parents, teachers, administrators, researchers, policy makers, and educational institutions, we are reminded that Texas has played an important role in the overall mission of the IDA. The Dallas, Houston, and Austin Branches, chartered in 1973, 1978, and 1988 respectively, each boast a rich history of supporting the science of reading and Structured Literacy throughout Texas. On this milestone anniversary, the three Texas branches are reminded that through collaboration, we can achieve remarkable and transformative goals.

In fact, this very publication, the Texas Resource Directory, is a testament to the incredible impact we can achieve through focused and passionate collaboration. In 1995, IDA Houston pioneered the scholarly resource guide for their branch, laying the foundation and inspiration for this joint venture. We are proud to have worked together to attract renowned authors, sponsors, and resources to feature in this directory. We are thankful to our esteemed authors for submitting such thought provoking articles and our valuable sponsors who have supported this publication and our mission!

Furthermore, we are also thrilled to participate in the IDA Collective Impact campaign to drive state-level policy on dyslexia and enhancing university and program accreditation standards. To that end we are supporting the pre-conference IDA Accreditation Symposium which will feature experts and practitioners discussing the importance and benefits of IDA accreditation, structured literacy, and IDA's Knowledge and Practice Standards (KPS).We are committed to ensuring that all educators are proficient in Structured Literacy and that all K-5 children learn to read through IDA's college and university accreditation.

In Texas, we are better together and will continue to advance the International Dyslexia Association's mission along with all the branches and global partners. We all have the vision of Structured Literacy in every K-5 classroom for every child across the nation and around the world.

Misty Clack, M.Ed
President, IDA Dallas

Jennifer Vastola, M.Ed
President, IDA Houston

Lisa Baker, M.Ed
President-Elect, IDA Austin

Sharon Roberts
President, IDA Austin

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Dyslexia Policy and State Infrastructure Workgroup Mission Statement -

Our mission is to develop and implement comprehensive policies and infrastructure to ensure effective, evidence-based Structured Literacy instruction for all students, with a particular focus on those with dyslexia. We are committed to promoting the adoption of the Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (KPS) and advocating for the Knowledge and Practice Examination for Effective Reading Instruction (KPEERI) as essential components of teacher preparation and professional development. Through strategic collaboration and advocacy, we aim to create a state-wide system that supports students with dyslexia in achieving their full potential.

University and Independent Program Workgroup Mission Statement -

Our mission is to establish and maintain rigorous standards for Structured Literacy teacher preparation programs within universities and independent institutions. We are committed to aligning programs with the Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (KPS) and promoting the Knowledge and Practice Examination for Effective Reading Instruction (KPEERI) as a critical component of teacher certification. By fostering collaboration and innovation, we aim to produce highly qualified educators equipped to provide effective instruction for all students, including those with dyslexia. Empowering teachers to lead, create and implement rigorous structured literacy programs.

Intervention for Students with Dyslexia: Advances in Research and Lingering Questions

Nathan H. Clemens
The University of Texas at Austin

Explicit phonics instruction directly teaches the connections between the sounds of language and printed letters, and how to use that information to read and spell words. It is supported through decades of research (Ehri, 2020) and is the core approach to intervention for students with word-level reading disability (WLRD; i.e., dyslexia, specific learning disability in basic reading). However, although much has been learned about effective strategies for students with WLRDs, questions remain. Intervention studies for students with WLRDs tend to have the strongest effects on pseudoword decoding and reading accuracy, but have weaker and less consistent effects on generalized skills in reading reading real words and text reading fluency (e.g., Hall et al., 2023). There is a need for continued inquiry on ways to enhance existing practices and advance interventions for students with WLRD. In this paper, I review some recent research developments, unanswered questions, and where research is headed next.

Teaching Flexibility in Word Decoding

It is possible that existing interventions have had relatively weaker effects in improving students' generalized word-reading skills because they have not sufficiently fostered students' flexible skills in decoding or how to navigate spelling-sound variability in a semi-transparent orthography, like English. Research has sought ways to promote stronger generalized, independent word reading skills for students with WLRD.

Teaching Multiple Decoding Strategies and Applying Them Flexibly

"Sounding out" (i.e., saying the sounds of each letter/letter combination in a word, then blending the sounds) is the primary strategy for decoding. However, it will not always be successful in determining a correct pronunciation. Lovett and colleagues' multicomponent intervention, Triple Focus (Lovett et al., 2017), is an example of how phonics instruction can be expanded to equip students with a versatile, generalizable word reading strategies. Triple Focus involved teaching five word identification strategies and training students to apply them flexibly when they encounter an unknown word: (a) sounding out; (b) reading by rime/analogy (e.g., "if I know best, I can read crest"); (c) "peeling off" to isolate prefixes or suffixes and the root word and reading the parts together as a whole word; (d) vowel alert in which students are taught to apply alternative pronunciations for vowel sounds; and (e) the "spy" strategy to find smaller words within compound words. In addition to learning the strategies, the intervention included teaching students how to recognize when alternative strategies for decoding were needed and apply them flexibly.

Considering "Set for Variability"

For many written words in English, students must learn to adjust a pronunciation derived by the letter sounds in the word--its spelling pronunciation--to its correct whole-word pronunciation (i.e., its "standard pronunciation"). For instance, when attempting to sound out the word *listen*, the resulting spelling pronunciation of "liss-ten" must be adjusted to its standard pronunciation ("lissen"). This requires flexibility on the part of the reader, referred to as "set for variability" (Tunmer & Chapman, 2012). Set for variability is a powerful predictor of reading skills and may be underdeveloped among students with WLRD (Steacy et al., 2023).

Ways to promote students' set for variability can be built into interventions. For example, Archer and colleagues' (2013) REWARDS intervention program targets students in 4th grade and up with word-reading difficulties and includes instruction and exercises in adjusting approximate pronunciations. In one exercise, teachers read a sentence orally and mispronounce one word based on its spelling pronun-

ciation (e.g., “The cap-tane steered the ship away from the rocks”). Students are asked to adjust the mispronounced word to its standard pronunciation. Students are taught to use this skill when decoding complex and multisyllabic words.

In summary, although more research is needed, teaching flexible decoding skills and set for variability are interesting areas of inquiry. This work may reveal new ways to enhance students’ flexible, generalized decoding skills.

The Role of Statistical Learning in Reading and Intervention

Statistical learning refers to skill and knowledge acquisition that is implicit; it is thought to occur through the recognition of patterns and probabilistic sequences across many exposures to variations in stimuli. Statistical learning offers explanations for how children acquire language without formal instruction.

Phonics instruction helps students learn to read many types of words; however, it is not possible, nor is it even necessary, for instruction to teach all the 10,000+ words that students will encounter in text. Rather, there are self-teaching mechanisms (Share, 1995) that engage as students learn how to use the alphabetic code. Scholars have recently argued that perceiving underlying statistical regularities of spelling patterns in words may help explain the ability of skilled readers to read a vast number of words without requiring instruction for each one (Treiman & Kessler, 2022). The idea is that through repeated exposure to words, readers implicitly build an understanding of the statistical regularities of the English spelling system, such as how pronunciations of letters and letter units are influenced by their positions in words (e.g., “gh” in “ghost” vs. “laugh”) or other letters that occur with them (e.g., “ea” in “bead” vs. “learn”). Steacy et al. (2020) found that, compared with typically developing readers, students with WLRDs had more difficulty attending to letters and letter units within words. In a review of research, Lee and colleagues (2022) observed that individuals

with WLRD demonstrated significantly lower performance on various types of statistical learning tasks compared to individuals without reading difficulties.

To date, it is not clear whether statistical learning can be "taught." However, there is value in considering how reading instruction and practice opportunities can be designed that make it more likely that statistical learning can occur. Statistical learning thrives on considerable opportunities to interact with variation in stimuli. In the case of reading, the stimuli are words. Thus, one way to create contexts that promote statistical learning is to ensure that students have ample opportunities to read a variety of texts and word types, with continuous feedback and support from a teacher. As will be discussed later, this underscores the importance of providing students with frequent opportunities to read authentic texts because they contain greater variations in word types, irregularity in spelling patterns, and diverse syntax. Interventions might also include strategies that promote flexible decoding strategies, such as trying alternative vowel sounds when needed (Lovett et al., 2017), or other strategies that teach students to adjust pronunciations. It also suggests that students may benefit from careful exposure to more variability in spelling patterns they are presented in decoding instruction. For example, Apfelbaum et al. (2013) found that first grade students made greater gains in learning vowel sounds when the surrounding consonants varied compared to when the surrounding consonants were consistent.

Strategies that systematically expose students to different types of spelling patterns and teach students to pay greater attention to letter combinations, their positions within words, and their relation to other letters in a process to "problem-solve" decoding may help draw greater attention to the statistical regularities of the spelling system.

Research has only just begun to investigate the role of statistical learning in reading, WLRDs, and intervention. Additionally, it is important to point out that although statistical learning involves implicit learning processes, explicit instruction in letter sounds and decoding skills is still necessary for establishing a foundation on which statistical learning can build.

Integrating Vocabulary (Semantic) Instruction Within Word Reading Interventions

A traditional focus of interventions for students with WLRDs emphasizes the connections between word spellings (orthographic representations) and pronunciations (phonological representations). Although orthographic to phonological connections are vital, connectionist perspectives suggest that semantic knowledge (i.e., vocabulary, morphology) may also aid word reading skills (Seidenberg, 2017). Kearns et al. (2016) observed that elementary students were better able to correct mispronunciations when they knew the meaning of words. Steacy and Compton (2019), with first- and second-graders at risk for WLRD, found that irregular words that were more imageable (i.e., words that are more likely to elicit a clear mental image, such as "soup") were more likely to be read accurately and learned faster than irregular words that were less imageable (e.g., "sure"), especially for students with lower initial word-reading skills. Other intervention research is inconclusive on the benefits of targeting semantic knowledge within decoding instruction (see Austin et al., 2022, for a review). However, there appears to be some evidence that semantic instruction, including

teaching morphemes (i.e., spelling units within words that hold meaning, such as affixes and roots) may help students in learning to read complex, irregular, and infrequent words when letter-sound rules are less applicable (Austin et al., 2022).

Should Reading Practice Use Decodable or Authentic Texts?

A key aspect of reading intervention involves providing frequent opportunities for students to read text aloud to a teacher or skilled reader (who is there to provide affirmative and corrective feedback). However, debate exists regarding the type of text that should be used for reading practice for students with reading difficulties. "Decodable" text refers to stories or passages written with a high proportion of words that are phonetically regular and are thus considered "decodable" by students that have learned the letter-sound correspondences contained in the words. In contrast, "authentic" texts include stories or passages that are written without an intentional selection of words based on their letter-sound regularity.

Although conventional wisdom (and recommendations from experts) suggest that the use of decodable text is an important part of intervention for students with WRLD, very little research has directly compared the effects of using decodable versus authentic texts. Some studies have indicated that students improved their reading skills regardless of the decodability of the text used (e.g., Jenkins et al., 2004). Price-Mohr and Price (2020) compared the use of high- and low-decodable text and found no differences in outcomes on early word reading measures, but that students that read low-decodable texts improved their reading comprehension more than students that read high-decodable text (e.g., Price-Mohr & Price, 2020). A recent review of intervention studies indicated that the reading outcomes of students with reading difficulties were similar regardless of whether decodable or other types of text were used (Pugh et al., 2023).

Thus, the most appropriate type of text to use in intervention is still a matter of debate. Until research says otherwise, it is perhaps better to think about how decodable and authentic texts can be used together strategically. Decodable text offers students opportunities to immediately practice new word reading skills in connected text. In addition to providing practice, the accessibility of decodable text can build confidence, which may be important for students with WLRD that have experienced repeated frustration in reading. On the other hand, authentic texts help familiarize students to natural syntax and expose them to a broader range of spelling patterns and vocabulary than what is available in decodable text.

To consider using both strategically, decodable text may be used more often for students at basic levels of reading development and when teaching a new letter sound or spelling pattern (most providers of decodable texts offer books with a high proportion of words with a specific letter sound or letter combination). Authentic text can still be used periodically at this point. As students become more skilled, authentic text should be used more often, with a proportionate decrease in the use of decodable text as appropriate. Eventually, authentic text can be used exclusively. Keep in mind that successful reading of authentic text should be the ultimate goal for all students; decodable text is a tool to help students get there. Regardless of what type of text is used, a teacher should be present to provided affirmative and corrective feedback while the student reads orally, and error correction should prompt students to rely on their decoding skills to read unfamiliar words.

Rethinking Reading Fluency Intervention

Reading fluency is the ability to read text accurately with ease, at an appropriate rate, and with attention to inflection and punctuation. It also is one of the more challenging skills to improve for students with WLRD (Torgesen,

2006). Repeated reading tends to be the most common approach to improving reading fluency, in which students read the same passage three to four times (Stevens et al., 2017). However, Stevens and colleagues' review found that the effects of repeated reading were strongest on the passages the students practiced. The few studies that examined effects on generalized reading fluency measures observed much lower or negligible effects.

Scholars have suggested alternatives to repeated reading. "Wide reading" involves reading several different passages, and "continuous reading" involves reading one longer passage of text. Both can be implemented for the same amount reading time as repeated reading. For instance, if repeated reading involves reading a 100-word passage four times, wide reading would involve reading four different 100-word passages, and continuous reading would involve reading a single 400-word passage. Studies of these approaches have found that wide or continuous reading resulted in equivalent benefits in students' reading skills compared to repeated reading (Ardoin et al., 2016; O'Connor et al., 2007). Reed et al. (2019) found that students who read three different passages that had a high proportion of overlapping words demonstrated significantly stronger gains in reading fluency compared to students who repeatedly read the same passage. Effects were stronger for lower-achieving readers. The potential benefits of wide and continuous reading relate to the earlier discussion on statistical learning: Providing students with opportunities to read a broader range of spelling patterns may benefit word recognition and skill generalization. Additionally, as anyone who has implemented repeated reading with a struggling reader will attest, students often loathe reading the same passage a third or fourth time. Wide and continuous reading can help reduce this monotony and may improve student motivation.

Conclusion

Questions remain regarding how to best design intervention for students with WLRD, and exciting new research is being conducted. Partnerships among practitioners and researchers will ensure a continued pursuit of important questions and rapid dissemination of evidence-based practices.

About

Dr. Nathan Clemens is a Professor in the Department of Special Education at The University of Texas at Austin. Dr. Clemens studies reading difficulties in children and youth, particularly, word reading difficulties for students in early grades and reading comprehension difficulties for students in later grades. His work is aimed at improving reading interventions, helping teachers make better use of assessment data to guide their instruction, and aligning evidence-based interventions with students'

unique learning needs. He has over 50 publications and is leading several federal research grants, including a current project aimed at developing an intervention to improve reading fluency for students with dyslexia.

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REACHING EMERGENT BILINGUAL STUDENTS WITH DYSLEXIA: STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

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In today's diverse educational field, it's essential to address the unique needs of emergent bilingual (EB) students, particularly those who are also identified with dyslexia. EB students are often referred to as English Language Learners (ELL) or English Learners (EL); these students' first language is not English, and they are working toward English language acquisition in the United States (US) school system [1]. EBs have diverse language backgrounds, cultures, socioeconomic levels, and educational experiences [2]. These students are in the process of learning a new language, to which they have had limited exposure while maintaining proficiency in their heritage language.

For some of these students, the pathway to literacy acquisition and proficiency has been full of challenges, especially when dyslexia joins the equation. Dyslexia, a neurodevelopmental disorder impacting reading skills, can significantly impede academic progress, particularly for EBs navigating multiple languages. Understanding the intersectionality of dyslexia and bilingualism is crucial for educators, as it sheds light on why EB students may struggle as they learn literacy foundations in English.

Research has shown that proficiency in an individual's first language is crucial to their capacity to acquire a second language [3]. This is why honoring their linguistic and cultural backgrounds while providing meaningfulinterventions is pivotal in effectively reaching and supporting EBs with dyslexia. Reinforcing proficiency in their first language serves as a foundational pillar in promoting academic success and overall well-being for these students. In this article, we will explore the significance of recognizing and addressing the needs of struggling EB students with dyslexia, highlighting strategies for fostering their literacy development within a culturally responsive framework.

Key Risk Factors for EBs with Dyslexia

Emergent bilingual students with dyslexia encounter several key risk factors that can aggravate their reading challenges. Dyslexia is a condition that affects individuals from all cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We must remember that dyslexia is a human condition not bound by country, has no language borders, and can affect anyone attempting to decode a printed alphabetic language (and, in some cases, a logographic language).

Dyslexia and other learning disorders can affect EBs as much as non-EBs. Being bilingual or culturally and linguistically diverse does not inherently increase the risk for dyslexia. A history of oral language disorder or delay in their primary language(s) may hinder their ability to grasp foundational language skills, impacting their literacy development. Additionally, a track record of reading and spelling difficulties in their heritage language can signal underlying dyslexic tendencies that persist across languages. Weaknesses in phonological awareness and rapid automatic naming—crucial for proficient reading—further contribute to their struggles in acquiring literacy skills in their primary and secondary languages [4]. Dyslexia may manifest just as prominently in their second language as in their primary language. EBs with dyslexia will exhibit challenges across both languages, although the specific nature of these difficulties may vary. These learning difficulties or disorders manifest differently depending on the characteristics of the language and the severity of the disorders. Individuals withdyslexia typically encounter greater difficulties with reading accuracy in opaque languages and reading speed in more transparent languages [5].

Despite interventions aimed at remediation, these students may exhibit a slower response to intervention due to the complex interplay of dyslexia and multilingualism. In other words, dyslexia interventions might work differently

and EBs could show gradual advancement or pace development depending on their first language proficiency. It is pertinent to establish that dyslexia is not a result of laziness, lack of motivation, or socioeconomic advantage or disadvantage. Thus, the students should not bemade to feel that they, in some way, can correct or avoid dyslexia without proper intervention techniques. It's essential to note that while their overall cognitive ability may not be significantly impaired, as measured by tests in their dominant language or nonverbal ability tests, dyslexic EBs often face unique challenges that require targeted support and intervention strategies tailored to their specific linguistic and cognitive needs [6].

Try This!

Take a piece of paper and something to write with. Let's do a spelling test. First, with your eyes closed, write your first and last name on the paper. How did you do?

Let's take it up a notch, now hold the pencil with your non-dominant hand, close your eyes, and write these words:

1. Cat 2. Dog 3. You 4. Cow 5. Fox

Open your eyes and check out your work.

How easy/hard was this task? How did you feel as you were trying to do a good job at your writing? Is your writing legible? Did you try to make it legible and fail?

In your mind, you could perfectly visualize what these words should look like on paper, but it likely didn't look too great once you opened your eyes. This is what our students with dyslexia grapple with, it can be so defeating for them. They know exactly what they want to present on paper, but their work does not visually reflect the vast depth of their knowledge.

Effective Literacy for EBs With Dyslexia

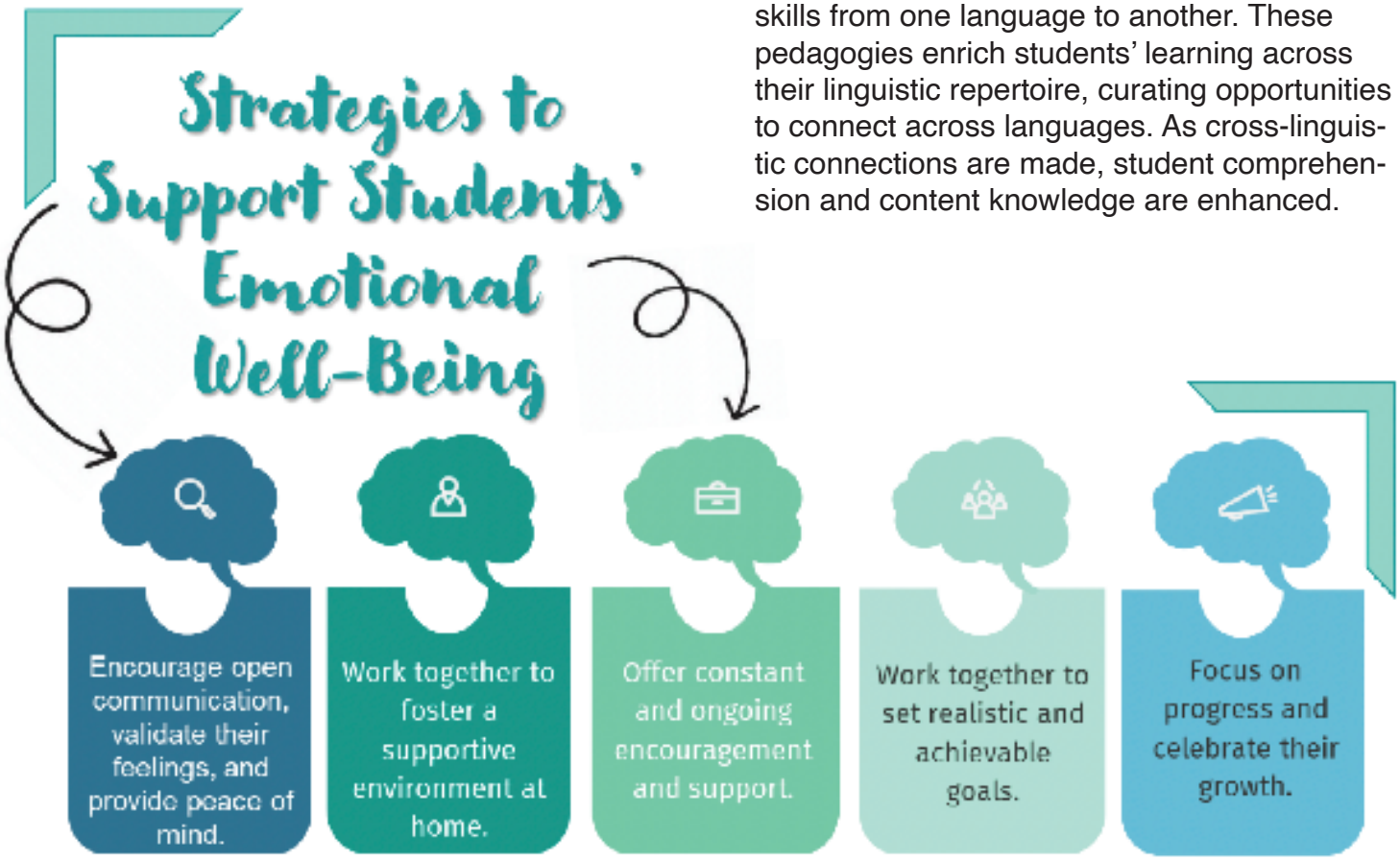
Effective literacy instruction for EBs with dyslexia should integrate the four domains of language: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Students learn literacy better when these four domains are intertwined into their learning and not taught independently. Scarborough's ropeweaves the following components: background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge, each of which should be taught explicitly to impart language comprehension. The rope interlaces phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition for word recognition. As students become increasingly strategic and automatic in their reading ability, they become more fluent in word recognition and text comprehension [7].

A recent publication on the science of reading for EB students guides us to what effective literacy instruction looks like for EBs. It consists of comprehensive instruction in all the components of reading taught explicitly and systematically. They should be offered multiple opportunities to integrate language, literacy, writing, and content knowledge. Both language and literacy development should be centered in the student's instruction so that the students not only decode words but also comprehend those words. The students should be able to access materials that build foundational reading skills,such as decodable texts and materials rich in language, vocabulary, background knowledge, and comprehension, such as informational texts, narrative texts, and poetry [8]. This material should be culturally and linguistically responsive and age-appropriate. Data should be used to inform students' literacy needs when considering selecting these materials while maintaining high expectations. The student's heritage language, funds of knowledge, culture, and interests should be valued because of their intrinsic value. It also should be leveraged to make connections to enhance their English language acquisition. EBs should be able to access dual language or bilingual instruction

that teaches and strengthens their heritage language in a method that is authentic to the language as they simultaneously acquire English and work towards positive literacy outcomes in both languages. Their instruction should be informed by assessment data in all languages of instruction, including the teacher's observational data. We should remember that EBs may have a more robust linguistic repertoire in multiple languages and should be considered when encompassing a student's literacy skills. The time students are developing their English language development should not be interrupted by interventions as this is an essential component for EB students.

Translanguaging

In 1991, researcher Cummins [9] stated that students must be encouraged to continue their heritage language development as they acquire a second language. Students should be allowed to read and discuss academic and social issues in their heritage language. García and Wei (2015) [10] explained that translanguaging in education means using one language to reinforce another to increase understanding. A framework for pedagogy for translanguaging in the bilingual classroom was published by Hamman et al. (2018) [11], providing guiding principles for implementation. The first principle advocates for purposeful design and implementation of flexible language spaces. This doesn't mean that your traditionally focused language spaces should be removed but that your academic day should be enhanced by strategic translanguaging to support their learning. The second principle implores us to leverage the students' linguistic repertoire by building in time for collaborative work. This collaboration should be built around the idea of inclusivity. The idea is that all students have a wealth of knowledge to draw from while collaborating with their peers. The third principle states that translanguaging pedagogies can assist in transferring language and skills from one language to another. These pedagogies enrich students' learning across their linguistic repertoire, curating opportunities to connect across languages. As cross-linguistic connections are made, student comprehension and content knowledge are enhanced.



Conclusion

This article has emphasized the importance of acknowledging and meeting the needs of emergent bilingual students with dyslexia while presenting practical strategies for promoting their literacy growth through a culturally responsive approach. A student's first language can significantly enhance their second language acquisition. As we see through translanguaging,the structured, purposeful interaction among students using their entire linguistic repertoire can facilitate the language transfer of information from one language to another. As students with dyslexia build upon their literacy knowledge through explicit and systematic methods, their language knowledge can be significantly enhanced using translanguaging pedagogy. Explicit and systematic literacy instruction for EBs with dyslexia should have multiple opportunities for integrating the four language domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) within a culturally and linguistically responsive framework. EBs with dyslexia are in a unique, seldom researched intersection of education that requires prioritizing so that their needs can be effectively met.

About the Authors

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ABARCANDO LOS BILINGÜES EMERGENTES CON DISLEXIA: ESTRATEGIAS Y ENFOQUES

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En el diverso campo educativo de hoy en día, es esencial atender las necesidades particulares de los bilingües emergentes (BE), particularmente aquellos diagnosticados con dislexia. Los estudiantes BE, comúnmente conocidos como estudiantes de inglés como segunda lengua (ELL por sus siglas en inglés); el primer idioma de estos estudiantes no es inglés y están trabajando para adquirir el idioma inglés en el sistema educativo estadounidense [1]. Los BEs provienen de diversos orígenes lingüísticos, culturas, niveles socioeconómicos y experiencias educativas [2]. Se encuentran en proceso de aprender un nuevo idioma, al que han tenido una exposición limitada, mientras mantienen el dominio de su lengua materna o primer idioma.

Para algunos de estos estudiantes, el camino hacia la adquisición y dominio de la las destrezas de alfabetización ha estado lleno de desafíos, especialmente cuando se suma la dislexia a la ecuación. La dislexia, un trastorno del neurodesarrollo que afecta las habilidades de lectura, puede obstaculizar significativamente el progreso académico, especialmente para los BEs que navegan entre varios idiomas. Comprender la interseccionalidad entre la dislexia y el bilingüismo es crucial para los educadores, ya que arroja luz sobre por qué los estudiantes BE pueden enfrentar dificultades al aprender los fundamentos de la alfabetización en inglés.

Investigaciones previas han demostrado que el dominio de la lengua materna de un individuo escrucial para su capacidad de adquirir una segunda lengua. [3]. Por tanto, es fundamental reconocer y valorar los antecedentes lingüísticos y culturales mientras se ofrecen intervenciones significativas para alcanzar y apoyar de manera efectiva a los BEs con dislexia.

Reforzar el dominio de su lengua materna sirve como un pilar fundamental para promover el éxito académico y bienestar general de estos estudiantes. En este artículo, exploraremos la importancia de reconocer y abordar las necesidades de los estudiantes BE con dislexia que enfrentan dificultades, resaltando estrategias para fomentar su desarrollo de la alfabetización dentro de un marco culturalmente receptivo.

Factores de riesgo clave en BEs con dislexia

Los BEs con dislexia enfrentan varios factores de riesgo clave que pueden agravar sus dificultades de lectura. La dislexia es una condición que afecta a personas de todos los orígenes culturales y lingüísticos. Es importante recordar que la dislexia es una condición humana que no está limitada por las fronteras de un país ni por barreras lingüísticas, y puede afectar a cualquier persona que intente decodificar un idioma alfabético impreso (y, en algunos casos, un lenguaje logográfico). La dislexia y otros trastornos del aprendizaje pueden afectar a los BEs tanto como a los que no lo son. Ser bilingüe o tener diversidad cultural y lingüística no aumenta inherentemente el riesgo de dislexia. Un historial de trastorno del lenguaje oral o un retraso en su(s) lengua(s) princ pal(es) puede obstaculizar su capacidad para comprender las habilidades lingüísticas fundamentales, lo que afecta su desarrollo de la alfabetización. Además, un historial de dificultades de lectura y ortografía en su lengua materna puede indicar tendencias disléxicassubyacentes que persisten en todos los idiomas. Las debilidades en la conciencia fonológica y la rápida denominación automática, cruciales para una lectura competente, contribuyen aún más a sus dificultades para adquirir habilidades de alfabetización en sus idiomas primarios y secundarios [4]. La dislexia puede manifestarse de manera tan prominente en susegundo idioma como en su idioma primario. Los BEs con dislexia presentarán desafíos en ambos idiomas, aunque la naturaleza específica de estas

dificultades puede variar. Estos desafíos o trastornos del aprendizaje se manifiestan de manera diferente según las características del lenguaje y la gravedad de los trastornos. Las personas con dislexia suelen encontrar mayores dificultades con la precisión de la lectura en idiomas opacos y con la fluidez de la lectura en idiomas más transparentes [5].

A pesar de las intervenciones dirigidas a la remediación, estos estudiantes pueden mostrar una respuesta más lenta a la intervención debido a la compleja interacción de la dislexia y el multilingüismo. En otras palabras, las intervenciones para la dislexia podrían tener resultados diferentes y los BEs podrían mostrar un progreso gradual dependiendo de su dominio del primer idioma. Es importante destacar que la dislexia no es el resultado de la pereza, falta de motivación o ventaja o desventaja socioeconómica. Por lo tanto, no se debe hacer sentir a los estudiantes que pueden corregir o evitar la dislexia sin técnicas de intervención adecuadas. Es esencial tener en cuenta que, si bien su capacidad cognitiva general puede no verse significativamente afectada, según lo medido porpruebas de su lengua dominante o pruebas de capacidad no verbal, los Bes con dislexia a menudoenfrentan desafíos únicos que requieren estrategiasde intervención y apoyo específicas adaptadas a sus necesidades lingüísticas y cognitivas [6].

Toma un pedazo de papel y algo para escribir. Hagamos una prueba de ortografía. Primero, con los ojos cerrados, escribe tu nombre y apellido en el papel. ¿Cómo te fue?

Llevémoslo a un nivel superior, ahora sostén el lápiz con tu mano no dominante, cierra los ojos y escribe estas palabras:

1. Mas 2. Sapo 3. Tu 4. Vaca 5. Zorro

Abre los ojos y echa un vistazo a tu trabajo.

¿Qué tan fácil o difícil fue esta tarea? ¿Cómo te sentiste mientras intentabas hacer un buen trabajo en tu escritura? ¿Es legible tu escritura? ¿Intentaste hacerla legible y fallaste?

En tu mente, podías visualizar perfectamente cómo deberían verse estas palabras en el papel, pero es probable que lucieran diferente una vez abriste los ojos. Esto es con lo que lidian nuestros estudiantes con dislexia, puede ser muy frustrante para ellos. Saben exactamente lo que quieren presentar en papel, pero su trabajo no refleja visualmente la vasta profundidad de su conocimiento.

Alfabetización efectiva para los BEs con dislexia

La enseñanza efectiva de la alfabetización para los BEs con dislexia debe integrar los cuatro dominios del lenguaje: lectura, escritura, comprensión auditiva y expresión oral. Los estudiantes aprenden mejor a leer y escribir cuando estos cuatro dominios están entrelazados en su aprendizaje y no se e señan de forma independiente. La teoría de la cuerda de Scarborough entrelaza los siguientes componentes: conocimientos previos, vocabulario, estructuras lingüísticas, razonamiento verbal y conocimientos de alfabetización, cada uno de los cuales debe enseñarse explícitamente para promover la comprensión lingüística. Esta teoría integra la conciencia fonológica, la decodificación y el reconocimiento visual para el reconocimiento de palabras. A medida que los estudiantes se vuelven cada vez más estratégicos y automáticos en su capacidad de lectura, también mejoran en el reconocimiento de palabras y la comprensión del texto [7].

Una reciente publicación sobre la ciencia de la lectura para BEs nos orienta sobre cómo llevar a cabo una instrucción efectiva de la lectoescritura este grupo. Esta instrucción implica una enseñanza exhaustiva de todos los componentes de la lectura de manera explícita y

sistemática. Los estudiantes deben recibir múltiples oportunidades para integrar el lenguaje, la alfabetización, la escritura y el contenido. Tanto el desarrollo del lenguaje como el de la alfabetización deben enfocarse en la comprensión del estudiante para que no solo decodifiquen las palabras, sino que también las comprendan. Para ello, es crucial que los estudiantes accedan a materiales que fomenten habilidades de lectura fundamentales, como textos decodificables y materiales ricos en lenguaje, vocabulario,conocimientos previos y comprensión, como textos informativos, narrativos y poéticos [8]. Estos materiales deben ser cultural y lingüísticamente receptivos, así como apropiados para la edad del estudiante. Además, los datos deben utilizarse para informar las necesidades de alfabetización de los estudiantes al seleccionar estos materiales, manteniendo siempre altas expectativas. Se debe valorar el primer idioma, los conocimientos previos, la cultura y los intereses del estudiante por su importancia intrínseca y para aprovecharlos en la adquisición del idioma inglés. Los estudiantes BE deben tener acceso a instrucción bilingüe que fortalezca su lengua materna de una auténtica, ya que están adquiriendo simultáneamente el inglés y trabajando hacia el éxito en la alfabetización en ambos idiomas. Además, esta instrucción debe basarse en datos de evaluaciones en todos los idiomas de instrucción, incluyendo observaciones del maestro. Es importante recordar que los BEs pueden tener un repertorio lingüístico más amplio en varios idiomas, lo que debe tenerse en cuenta al abordar sus habilidades de alfabetización. Por último, el tiempo dedicado al desarrollo de la adquisición del inglés no debe verse interrumpido por intervenciones, ya que es un componente esencial para los BEs.

Translingüismo

En 1991, el investigador Cummins [9] destacó la importancia de formentar el desarrollo continuo del idioma materno de los estudiantes mientras adquieren un segundo idioma. Se les debe permitir a los estudiantes leer y discutir temas académicos y sociales en su lengua materna. García y Wei (2015) [10] explicaron que el translenguaje en la educación implica el uso de una lengua para reforzar otra y aumentar la comprensión. Hamman y sus colegas (2018) [11] propusieron un marco pedagógico para

el translenguaje en el aula bilingüe, que establece principios rectores para su implmentación. El primer principio aboga por el diseño e implementación de espacios lingüísticos flexibles. Esto no implica eliminar los espacios lingüísticos Alfabetización efectiva para los BEs con dislexia tradicionales, sino proporcionar un espacio autentico y estratégico para utilizar el translenguaje. El segundo principio nos sugiere que aprovechar el repertorio lingüístico de los estudiantes mediante el trabajo colaborativo, basado en el principio de inclusión. La idea es que todos los estudiantes contribuyan con su amplio conocimiento previo mientras colaboran con sus compañeros. El tercer principio establece que las pedagogías translingüísticas pueden facilitar la transferencia de idioma y habilidades entre idiomas. Estas pedagogías enriquecen el aprendizaje de los estudiantes al aprovechar su repertorio lingüístico y seleccionar oportunidades para conectar los idiomas. Al establecer conexiones interlingüísticas, se mejora la comprensión del contenido y el conocimiento de los estudiantes.

Conclusión

Este artículo ha subrayado la importancia de reconocer y atender las necesidades de los estudiantes bilingües emergentes con dislexia, al mismo tiempo que presenta estrategias prácticas para fomentar su desarrollo en alfabetización mediante un enfoque culturalmente receptivo. El primer idioma de un estudiante puede mejorar significativamente su adquisición del segundo idioma. Como hemos visto a través del translenguaje, la interacción estructurada y con propósito entre los estudiantes que utilizan todo su repertorio lingüístico puede facilitar la transferencia de información de un idioma a otro. A medida que los estudiantes con dislexia desarrollan sus habilidades de alfabetización a través de métodos explícitos y sistemáticos, su competencia lingüistica puede mejorar significativamente mediante la pedagogía translingüística. La instrucción explícita y sistemática de la alfabetización para los BEs con dislexia debe proporcionar múltiples oportunidades para integrar los cuatro dominios lingüísticos (lectura, escritura, comprensión auditiva y expresión oral) dentro de un marco cultural y lingüísticamente receptivo. Estos estudiantes se encuentran en una intersección educativa única y raramente investigada, lo que requiere priorización para abordar y satisfacer efectivamente sus necesidades.

Sobre las autoras

Concepción Moncada Cummings está realizando su doctorado en Educación Especial y se apasiona por la investigación educativacentrada en los bilingües emergentes y la recuperación de la alfabetización temprana. Actualmente se encuentra en su segundo año en la Universidad de Florida. Antes de unirse a los Florida Gators, completó su maestría en Alfabetización Temprana e Inglés como Segundo Idioma de Southern Methodist University. Además, ha trabajado como practicante académica de idiomas, brindando apoyo a estudiantes con dislexia en entornos tanto bilingües como monolingües.

Norma Gómez-Fuentes se desempeña actualmente Especialista Bilingüe en Dislexia para Cityscape Schools. Ha dedicado su carrera más allá del asula, colaborando con maestros de primaria como mentora y proporcionando desarrollo profesional en diversas áreas de alfabetización. Norma completó su maestría de la Universidad de Texas en Arlington en estudios de alfabetización y actualmente está trabajando para obtener la certificación de Terapeuta Académica del Lenguaje (CALT) de ALTA, con el objetivo de convertirse en una terapeuta de dislexia licenciada

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What Do Students with Dyslexia, ADHD, and Autism Need to be Successful?

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"That student is impossible—they won't do anything you ask." In a perfect world, all students with multiple exceptionalities would be well understood and effectively supported by all members of their education and treatment team. In reality, that's rarely the case, despite the best intentions on the part of school personnel and medical providers and the children themselves. All professionals need to understand the individual complexity of children with multiple disabilities, meet them where they are at, and have a variety of personalized strategies for helping them to learn, grow, and develop. These ten guidelines provide professionals a road map for what to consider when working with complex kids with multiple neurodevelopmental disorders. "Impossible" kids become kids with remarkable potential when adults change their lens and their own behaviors.

1. Complex students need us to observe and learn about each one.

Individuate them from other students. All three of these conditions can look very different in individual students and when students have a combination of neurodevelopmental conditions, it's vitally important to understand that particular student, their mind, and what works and doesn't work for them. Avoid generalizing and making assumptions about students with dyslexia, ADHD, and autism. Students with multiple diagnoses are always complex students and it will take time to get to know each one. As the saying goes, "If you've met with one person with autism, you've met one person with autism." That is infinitely more true for students with autism, dyslexia, and ADHD. A good question to ask ourselves is, "How does this child's exceptionalities affect them? How do they manifest in this child?"

2. Understand and educate yourself about the student's diagnoses and comorbidities. At a minimum, professionals should know the formal diagnostic criteria for each disorder so they can differentiate symptoms and behaviors.

Many times, actions that are undesirable or problematic are labeled as behaviors or choices when in reality they are symptoms. For example, when a teacher says, "If Mason would just settle down in class and focus better, he wouldn't have a problem in this class. I know he's bright, he's just not trying." If adults working with students like Mason understand that inconsistency in effort and poor motivation for routine tasks is part of the ADHD neurology, they would understand that coaching his executive functioning skills is going to have a bigger payoff than making assumptions or judgments.

3. Know what is and is not evidence based interventions for dyslexia, ADHD, and autism.

Far too few people understand that there are interventions that work for each of these disorders and interventions that have very little scientific backing. It's imperative that when interventions are implemented, the results are tracked. Multi-sensory instruction is a strategy that should be helpful to students with all three conditions, as should small group instruction and manipulatives.

4. Identify key strengths in their executive functioning.

The Dawson & Guare model outlined in the *Smart but Scattered* series of books is a useful framework for doing this as it includes assessment questionnaires for all ages, from young children through adults. In their model, they identify eleven executive functioning skills in a developmental order:

Dawson & Guare Model of Executive Functioning Skills
Response Inhibition
Working memory
Emotional control
Sustained attention
Task initiation
Planning/Prioritizing
Organization
Time management
Goal directed persistence
Flexibility/Shifting focus
Metacognition

Help the student connect these strengths to their goals and strategies for goal attainment. “Liam, one of your best strengths is task initiation. This means you often have an easy time starting tasks in class or at home. You decided you wanted to get 100% of your homework done this week–let’s figure out how to use your ability to get started to achieve your goal.”

5. Identify key challenges in a complex student’s executive functioning.

Identifying key challenges shifts the lens from motivation or effort to seeing what skills might be lagging. It’s important to recognize that the goal isn’t to develop every skill perfectly but to identify the pain points and provide scaffolding. “Liam, one of the areas that’s hard for you is task completion (goal-directed persistence). Let’s find three things to try this week to help you finish your math homework after your initial enthusiasm is gone.” A student with dyslexia, autism, and ADHD may need more scaffolding for a longer period of time and multiple accommodations. With sufficient training and practice, education professionals can coach executive functioning skills using a multisensory approach, with a clear structure, breaks, and rewards.

6. Set specific, measurable, attainable goals with the student.

Engaging the student at the very beginning of the process is essential for success. Whether you create the goals together or choose goals from a set of possibilities (this can work better for some students with autism), the student has to have voice and agency in determining how their efforts will be directed. Use multi-sensory methods to create checklists, prompts, reminders, and progress reports. Goals should be reviewed weekly, with the student reflecting or reporting first and the professional adding their feedback after listening and guiding the student’s input. For example, “What went well this week, Nathan? Which goals did you make progress on? How did you achieve that?” From there, the discussion can shift toward questions like, “What do you wish you had been able to do this week that you didn’t? What got in the way?”

7. Base your goals on developmental age, not chronological age.

Students with ADHD can be delayed three years or even 30% of their chronological age in certain areas of development. Furthermore, development tends to be uneven across domains of development—that is, one child could have verbal skills above most of their peers, but have emotional development more akin to a student three grades younger. However, we can’t simply assume a developmental age—assessment is needed in the domains of physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and speech/language. Knowing the areas of strength versus relative weakness is vital to understanding and supporting that individual child. For example, Ethan, a fifteen year old who has attended school and been home schooled, has speech and language skills that are off the charts. In terms of physical development, he can’t print all of his letters, tie his shoes, or use eating utensils. What does Ethan need? Praise and respect for the skills he does have and slow, methodical practice of fine motor tasks.

8. Plan a system of rewards with the student.

As a general principle, rewards are anything of value that reinforces the desired behavior. Rewards are far more powerful than punishment and are especially important for neurodiverse students. When students with ADHD are being asked to do tasks that are non-preferred or students with autism are being asked to step outside their comfort zone, it’s important that their efforts are rewarded in a way that is significant and meaningful to them. These are some of the most difficult tasks for students and their brain alone may not send them a strong enough positive message. This is where having designed a system of rewards with the student becomes so valuable. The desired, highly valuable reward helps the student overcome their anxiety, rigidness, or lack of internal motivation. It’s important to stress that the student must be involved in choosing their rewards and setting up the milestones for earning them.

9. Use breaks wisely. Use routine wisely.

Students with multiple exceptionalities, even those with above average intelligence or giftedness, can find themselves more easily fatigued during school or when completing academic work. Dyslexia is creating a higher demand for cognitive processing, ADHD is distracting, and autism can create sensory overload. When Daniel is at school, he finds himself in need of more frequent breaks to just allow his brain a time to rest. The five minutes between classes is almost never enough for him, “I’m still thinking and rushing during that time to get

to my next class and be prepared while trying to remember all the last minute directions from the last class that I didn't have time to write down." Breaks allow all people to have a sufficient pause, atypical students may need a longer chronological period of time for an effective pause. Routine also decreases stress in that it lessens cognitive overload. When students know what to expect and what will be expected of them, they need less executive functioning skills and can harness their cognition toward learning and analyzing content. Sharise says, "My biology teacher is great! She always starts class with a brief recap of the day before, tells us the three major topics for the day, and ends with a short five question quiz." Because Sharise knows how class is likely to flow, she can focus on learning biology not figuring out what's going to happen next. Breaks and routines are equally important for complex students and need to be individualized for maximum benefit. This doesn't have to mean an individualized schedule, simply individual accommodations that work for that student.

10. Celebrate.

Sharing genuine joy and respect for a student's achievement is one of the best feelings in the world. Avoid phrases like, "I knew you could do it" or "That's what happens when you work hard." Instead use phrases that develop the student's own self-respect and pride, such as, "How does it feel to achieve your goal? When did you realize you were going to be successful?" These types of questions also build the most important executive functioning skill–metacognition.

These guidelines are not complicated to implement. They require a shift in perspective, careful observation, and flexibility on the part of professionals and parents. The time spent understanding the individual child and their unique profile of strengths and weaknesses pays off significantly in helping students to create focus, engagement, and connection. Remember, "If you've met one child with autism, dyslexia, and ADHD, you've met one child with autism, dyslexia, and ADHD." They're not all the same.

About

Dr. Norrine Russell is the founder and owner of Russell Coaching for Students, an international student coaching practice that provides support for typical and atypical students in the areas of executive functioning, social and emotional skills, academic and study skills, and other life skills. With twenty-five years of experience supporting healthy youth development and conducting parenting education, Dr. Russell has extensive knowledge of child and adolescent development, learning styles, special needs, and positive parenting philosophies. Headquartered in Tampa, Florida, Russell Coaching is the largest student coaching practice in the US and serves students across the globe.

Dr. Russell has a Ph.D. in Psychology from Bowling Green State University with a focus on both psychology and education. Prior to starting her coaching and consulting practice, Dr. Russell worked at a variety of well-known non-profit agencies, including the YWCA of the City of New York, the Tampa Y, and The Ophelia Project and Boys Initiative of Tampa Bay. She has taught psychology and education at Sweet Briar College, University of Minnesota-Morris, University of Tampa, and a number of other colleges. She has served on numerous boards and volunteered with various organizations, mostly recently as the Interim CEO (full-time volunteer) at Plato Academy Schools Corporation in Clearwater, Florida in '20-'21, serving on the Board at Plato Academy, and in July of 2021, joining the Board of Directors at One Circle Foundation, an international nonprofit based in California.

HAVING BETTER EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AT WORK: TEN KEY TIPS.

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ABSTRACT

The executive functions are a set of cognitive skills that are self-directed and allow us to choose, and subsequently work towards, our future goals. Barkley (2022) describes seven of them: self-awareness, inhibition, nonverbal working memory, verbal working memory, emotional self-control, self-motivation, and planning/problem solving. Good executive functioning is critical formost occupations, so struggles with these skills can have negative consequences on a person's work performance. Ten tips are offered to help improve executive functioning in the workplace including talking to yourself out loud, externalizing important information, and breaking down large projects into smaller chunks.

KEY WORDS

executive functions, workplace

HAVING BETTER EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONING AT WORK: TEN KEY TIPS.

More and more at my practice, in one form or another, I am receiving phone calls for help with adult executive functioning in the workplace. Sometimes, the calls are from early-career professionals, wondering if there, "could be something wrong." Other times, the calls are from business owners or upper-level management folks, asking how they can support their creative and brilliant employes, often working from home, who are struggling to meet deadlines and juggle multiple projects. But what are the "executive functions"? Why are they important at work? And most importantly, what can we do to have better executive functioning at work?

Although there is no single, agreed upon definition of the term, Dr. Russell Barkley has put forth a comprehensive model of the executive functions (Barkley, 1997), and it is his model that I rely upon most heavily in my work. Dr. Barkley developed his model of the executive functions as they pertain to Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, but weaknesses have also been associated with many other conditions. Additionally, experts have found weak executive functioning can be seen in people who have no other diagnosable condition as well. Regardless of the etiology of weakness, Barkley's model still applies as a way to understand and address these cognitive skills.

In general terms, Barkley describes the executive functions as self-directed actions needed to choose, and subsequently work towards, future goals. In his 2022 book, he describes the following seven executive functions:

1) SELF-AWARENESS:

what he also calls using "the mind's mirror." This includes the ability to turn our attention onto ourselves and take notice of our behaviors, motives, likes, dislikes, strengths, and challenges. Noticing is the key first step in the process that ultimately allows us to make adjustments moving forward in order to maximize

desired outcomes. For example, self-awareness allows me to recognize that my most productive time of day is mid-morning through early afternoon, but in the evening, I struggle to focus. Armed with this information, I can structure my day so that I do my writing between 10:00 am and 3:00 pm, and reserve evenings for exercise or socializing.

2) INHIBITION:

what he also calls using "the mind's breaks." This includes such things as withholding a dominant response, or the response that is the most typical when confronted with a given stimulus (e.g., stopping myself from grabbing my phone when I hear a text alert). It also includes interrupting an ongoing behavior when appropriate in order to do something else (e.g., shifting from working alone in my office, to attending a group meeting in the conference room, then back to working alone in my office).

3) NONVERBAL WORKING MEMORY:

which he also calls "the mind's eye." This describes a person's ability to hold images, sounds, tastes, touches, and scents in mind long enough to do something with them. Because of the dominance of vision for our survival, this executive skill is primarily thought of in terms of vision. It includes things such as holding in mind images of complex procedures so we can perform them (e.g., remembering how my supervisor showed me to use the copy machine at my new job). It also includes holding sequences of past events in mind and referring to them across time, which provides for us our sense of time, and enhances our ability to plan ahead (e.g., using past experience to plan out my morning so as to make a 9:00 am flight, adjusting for rainy conditions and road construction).

4) VERBAL WORKING MEMORY:

which he also refers to as using "the mind's voice." This involves the ability to hold verbal information in mind so we can process and manipulate it. It involves talking to ourselves in order to think and reason. Activities such as comprehending what we read or hear (e.g., referencing the employee handbook to learn and follow the dress code), or considering the possible solutions to a dilemma with a coworker (e.g., debating how to address performance issues with my new secretary who has double booked me three times in the last two weeks) are heavily reliant on verbal working memory.

5) EMOTIONAL SELF-CONTROL:

which he also refers to as "the mind's heart." This executive function includes cheering ourselves up after receiving bad news or learning of a setback (e.g., remaining calm enough to problem solve when you learn of budget cuts that result in the cancellation of all work-related travel) and calming ourselves down in order to "get back to work" after a success (e.g., being enthusiastic about a new, big contract but still attending to the "old business"). Our emotions also play a role in decision making and planning, as we weigh the options and decide upon the one(s) that "feel right" (e.g., giving my new secretary another chance because I know her father has been very sick). Finally, emotional self-control allows us to remain in charge of ourselves, and respond to "big feelings" in a socially-acceptable way (e.g., staying calm and making adjustments when I get to the airport and see that my flight is delayed).

6) SELF-MOTIVATION:

what Barkley also calls "the mind's fuel-tank." It works closely with emotional self-control so we can notice our level of arousal and emotional state and make adjustments to help us continue working towards a goal (e.g., if I notice I am feeling tired while working in my windowless office, I can go for a brief walk outside. Or if I am getting frustrated with a project, I can consult a trusted colleague). Emotional self-control and self-motivation also help us persist towards goals when there are no immediate, external motivators (e.g., preparing to take a re-certification exam in nine months, I can mentally conger up an image of how good it will feel to meet this goal as I stay in and study on a

Saturday night).

7) PLANNING AND PROBLEM SOLVING:

Barkley also calls this "the mind's playground." If we can hold verbal and nonverbal information in mind, manage our impulses, motivations, and emotions, and be aware of our strengths and challenges, we can now plan and problem solve. We are able to shift smoothly between the big picture (e.g., I am working on a report that needs to be done by the end of the month) and small details (e.g., how do I spell "expenses"?). We can also shuffle various bits of information around in our mind, even when emotions are high, in order to problem solve (e.g., figuring out who will cover classes when four teachers are out sick on the same day, or planning how to finish three big projects that are all due on June 1).

If you find that weaknesses in the executive functions are plaguing you or someone you know at work, and you are wondering where to begin, here are my top ten tips you can follow, starting today, to perform better at work!

1. BUILD BETTER HABITS.

First and foremost, no brain can be good at the executive functions if its health is neglected. Brains need adequate and consistent sleep, healthy nutrients, exercise, and water. Brains cannot function well if they are bathed in stress chemicals or toxins. If you do nothing else, prioritize having a healthy brain. So many folks come to my office seeking executive function coaching, when what they really need is to sleep eight hours a night, adjust their diets, work out, drink more water, avoid alcohol and smoking, and practice mindful minutes throughout the day. But how? How can someone do all of that consistently? There is no secret, no fad, and no expensive program I can recommend. But the answer boils down to building better habits. Want to drink more water? Make water more accessible and obvious throughout the day. Want to exercise more? Set the intention by saying to yourself firmly, "I will walk for 30 minutes at lunch every day." Want to drink less alcohol? Try taking a cooking class with your friends rather than meeting for happy hour. In short, make what you want more of, more available. Make what you want less of, less available. And firmly set the intentions for your new habits by stating when and where you will do them. Also, your identity drives your habits, so shift your identity. Look in the mirror and say to yourself, "I am a healthy person who values my brain and my body." Then go live in ways that are consistent with that identity!

2. PUT IT DOWN IF YA CAN'T HOLD IT ALL.

If your verbal and nonverbal working memory "counter spaces" are small, or cluttered with other things (like stress), you need to take key information out of your head, and put into your environment for easy reference. You can't carry it all. In other words, externalize key information so you can reference it as you work, rather than hold it in your mind. For example, keep a list of frequently used passwords taped inside your desk drawer, or make a checklist of how to lock up at the end of the day and tape it to the back of your office door. Producing the same report for your boss every month? Make a template. Any repeatable process can be turned into a checklist or template. If you are concerned about having too much clutter on the walls, try a binder and keep it at your fingertips. In my writing space, I keep a binder of frequently referenced information to the right of my computer screen, and turn to it regularly. Relying on external reminders and cues will help you work more efficiently and decrease the chances you will make careless mistakes. Externalize everything that you can.

3. SEE TIME.

That's right! Make time visible. Use visual timers, hourglasses, and clocks. Go old school with a paper planner and block off times in your day with different colored highlighters. Working on a big project? Look on line for a blank calendar of the month and print it out. Then write down your deadlines and plans on how you will get it done. You can also "hear" time, by using

songs or playlists to designate different work periods or routines. Get creative! Use your senses to make time more tangible and, therefore, easier to gauge.

4. MAKE IT REAL.

Make problem solving and mental processing as concrete as possible. Rearranging your office? Make cutout, scale models to arrange on graph paper. Planning a big project? Write the steps down on index cards and shuffle them around in ways that make sense to you. Setting the work schedule for multiple employees? Write each person's name on a piece of paper and arrange the papers on a large, monthly calendar. At minimum, get out a good old piece of paper and pencil and draw or write out what you are mentally wresting with. Experiment with different formats; don't always rely on a list or an outline. A spider-web may help for considering problems that have multiple causes or influences. A Ferris wheel may be good model for listing the various aspects that you need to consider while planning an event.

5. TALK TO YOURSELF.

Self-speech is the engine of verbal working memory. And sometimes, if we are struggling to understand a concept, solve a problem, or comprehend what we are reading, it helps to talk it out, out loud. Pretend you are explaining the problem to someone else, or perhaps teaching a class on the topic. Or, borrow a therapeutic technique from my colleagues and talk to an empty chair, imagining someone in that chair listening to you and trying to follow along. Get creative. Do it in a distinctive voice, pretending to be someone you admire, or acting as a vivid character from television or movies. Hold an imaginary microphone and do it like Clint Eastwood might. Or imagine you are Winnie the Pooh telling Christopher Robin about this problem. If you can visualize it while talking it out, even better!

6. MORE SCREEN TIME, KIND OF.

Struggling to use your nonverbal working memory? Barkley suggests you close your eyes and imagine yourself turning on your favorite screened device, and then watch the situation unfold on the screen in your mind's eye. For me, I pretend I am at the movies in my reclining seat with popcorn in hand. Trying to organize your office space? Close your eyes and picture the ideal set up on your mental screen. Planning what to make for dinner? Turn to the movie screen in your mind and try to visually recall what you have in the pantry at home. When paired with self-talk, visualizing on the screen in your mind can be a very powerful planning and problem-solving tool. Imagine, using the help of a pretend screen in your mind.

7. PICTURE WINNING THE RACE, BUT DON'T FORGET TO JUMP THE HURDLES ALONG THE WAY.

When we are pursuing a goal, it may be tempting to focus so much on how good it will feel when we achieve it that we overlook how hard the journey may be. Conversely, we may dwell on all the obstacles so much that we are discouraged from even starting. The key is to do both: imagine the win, but plan for the hurdles. Psychologists have found that a process known as "mental contrasting with implementation intentions," is most effective (Duckworth et al., 2011). Through this process, we concentrate on the positive outcomes while simultaneously thinking about the obstacles that may get in the way. Then, we create a series of what are called "implementation intentions," which are specific plans in the form of if-then statements that link those obstacles with a specific plan for how we will overcome each one. For example, "If I get distracted while working, then I will stop and take two deep breaths, then redirect my attention back to work." Or, "If my phone alerts me more than five times in the next half-hour, then I will put it in the other room while I work." Planning for obstacles, and then executing those plans, helps us move through the obstacles with little delay, and minimizes their emotional impact.

8. DO BORING BETTER.

Let's face it, when a project is not very fun, there is little positive emotion attached to it, or worse yet, there is negative emotion attached to it. Therefore, try to attach some positive emotion to the work by adding in things that give you good feelings. For example, play music you enjoy while cleaning or working out, or light a pleasant-smelling candle (if allowed) and listen to music without lyrics while working on your computer. Hold out incentives for yourself such as a special lunch, downloading a new song to your playlist, or getting a massage when you reach certain goals. You may also try concentrating on what your paycheck allows you to accomplish, like feeding your family or taking a vacation. Put pictures of the rewards and motivators all around your workspace. Remind yourself of your why. Finally, before starting an extended work session, take a few minutes to stretch, breathe, and engage in a brief, mindful meditation. There are plenty of guided meditations on the internet, so check them out and find some that work for you.

9. STOP AND SMELL THE IMAGINARY ROSES.

When you start to notice strong feelings, whether pleasant or unpleasant, stop. Just freeze. Take a slow and steady, deep breath in your nose as if you are smelling a delicate, beautiful rose. Hold that breath for a count of four, then slowly blow it out through your mouth. Do this three times. Breathing in this manner has been shown to release neurochemicals that help us calm down, gain better control of our emotions, and be able to respond to our surroundings in a more deliberate and plannful manner. The necessity of this strategy seems obvious when we are faced with strong, negative feelings, but its importance when feeling pleasant feelings should not be overlooked. How many of us have, after being given a compliment, committed to a project or responsibility that we later wished we hadn't? It is possible to make impulsive decisions when feeling good feelings as well. Remember, when feeling strong feelings of any kind, stop and breathe before taking action or making decisions.

10. BREAK IT DOWN.

Our work demands can feel overwhelming because they seem so big,complex, and insurmountable. But no mountain has been climbed in one leap, and Rome wasn't built in a day. Step by step and brick by brick is the only way anything amazing has been accomplished.

Big projects need to be broken down into their bricks. If you are struggling to see the trees for the forest, ask a friend or trusted colleague to help you take big projects and smash them up into lots of little projects. Then write them all down (on separate index cards that you can shuffle around when planning your week, even) and just do the next thing. Day by day, hour by hour. Just do the next thing. Break your day into 30-minute increments with brief breaks in between. Have morning goals and afternoon goals. Review your goals and your progress regularly, and adjust as necessary. Also, ask that friend or trusted colleague to hold you accountable. Check in on a regular basis and report your progress. Ask for feedback and be open to new ideas. Just don't quit. Step by step, brick by brick 30- minute chunk by 30-minute chunk, keep on keeping on.

Managing weaknesses in the executive functions may also involve seeking professional help through executive function coaching, or talking with your doctor about the possibility of a diagnosable condition that may be treated with medication or therapy. It largely depends upon the symptoms, their functional impact on your day-to-day life, and what seems to be causing the problems. If you find that you are applying the above tips and not seeing the improvements you desire, or if you are struggling to consistently implement the above tips, it may be time to reach out to a professional. But take comfort in knowing there are things that can be done.

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ABOUT

Cheryl Chase, Ph.D. is a licensed clinical psychologist in private practice. She specializes in the diagnostic and neuropsychological assessment that impact children – young adults: ADHD, Pervasive Developmental Disorders, Learning Disorders, and emotional concerns. In addition to her clinical practice, Dr. Chase also leads workshops on such timely topics as executive functioning, differentiated instruction, and creative ways to support those who struggle in school.

Dr. Chase is an active member of the American Psychological Association, the International Dyslexia Association, and the Learning Disabilities Association. She has devoted her career to helping children reach their fullest potential.

Dyslexi…uh? Understanding the most common learning disability

Tiffany K. Peltier, Ph.D.

As we are all aware, the term “dyslexia” has been the center of many laws, regulations, and trainings. However, if we don’t first begin the work of dispelling the persistent misconceptions that surround this term, the evidence-based understanding, fair evaluation, and effective intervention of the most common learning disability identified in public schools today may never widely occur.

Within the field of learning science, there is a body of research around what researchers call “conceptual change.” This is the study of how people come from believing misconceptions to believing scientific conceptions of a specific topic. This originated with studies of children learning scientific concepts that conflicted with their current beliefs, such as the understanding that the earth is round, not flat, as it may seem to them when they walk around on the flat ground every day.

The seminal theory in conceptual change (Posner et al, 1982) research states that for conceptual change from a misconception to a scientific conception to be possible, their first must be:

1.) dissatisfied with their current misconception, and the new, scientific conception must be:
2.) intelligible, or able to be understood,
3.) plausible, or able to be believed, and
4.) fruitful, or able to produce helpful results.

One way in which researchers have found to help people change their conception around specific topics to more scientific conceptions is to use a refutation text. In a refutation text, the writer first dispels the misconception head on, then introduces the more scientific conception, and explains it in a way that the reader understands it as intelligible, plausible, and fruitful for their career or life.

More recently, the study of conceptual change has taken on topics such as helping people better understanding climate change, the role of fluoride in water, or the GMOs in food. I ran studies using this theory and practices to help pre-service teachers better understand the term, “dyslexia,” and how it relates to instruction, evaluation, and laws in public schools (e.g., Peltier et al, 2020). The text for that can be found for free to read, download, or use in your own practice, here: https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/FBYHT .

In Texas, some of these misconceptions about dyslexia have been widespread among educators, administrators, and even in the state’s dyslexia handbook. At various points in time, Texas has promoted unproven and non-effective interventions for students with dyslexia, such as colored lenses and overlays, and unlawful evaluation practices.

Growing up in public schools in Katy, Texas, I have seen firsthand the times when Texas has been scolded by the federal government for funneling students with dyslexia into 504 plans—although 504 was never meant to provide intervention—it is a civil rights law meant to merely provide accommodations for students with disabilities, such as ramps for students in wheelchairs and closer seating or larger font for students with visual impairments.

When the latest federal special education law, Individual with Disabilities Education Act, known as IDEA, passed in 2004, all states were mandated to find students who had disabilities in their districts to provide intervention--and the term dyslexia was mentioned by name within the category of specific learning disabilities. However, some states, such as Texas, ignored or were ignorant of this until recently. HB3928 should have never had

to be passed—many of these new requirements have been in federal law since 2004. Yet, because of the pervasive misconceptions permeating through the fabric of Texas's (and other state's) dyslexia laws, regulations, and Dyslexia Handbook, it was desperately needed to right the ship and clarify the legal rights of students with dyslexia within public schools--and hold the entire Texas public school system accountable to the rights of students who struggle to learn to read.

Disentangling the web of misconceptions surrounding dyslexia stands as the cornerstone for authentic advancements in education. Despite strides in legislation, persistent myths continue to cloud the public's perception of assessing, evaluating, and intervening with students facing dyslexia. Notably, the recent enactment of Texas legislation, HB3928, brings clarity to dyslexia-related aspects in public schools. These enduring challenges emphasize the urgency of dispelling misconceptions, championing the rights of students with dyslexia, and forging a more enlightened and fair educational terrain.

About

Dr. Tiffany Peltier brings over 12 years of experience in the education field, serving as an elementary teacher in three different states, acting as an instructional coach to elementary teachers, and teaching undergraduate pre-service teachers within special education, learning, sciences, and literacy coursework at Texas A&M and the University of Oklahoma. She has also provided PL sessions for various schools and districts around early reading instruction and learning disabilities, been contracted with a state department of education to develop and provide Dyslexia Awareness training to educators across the state, and has provided professional learning opportunities to thousands of teachers, SLPs, school psychologists, and administration throughout the US as a National LETRS Independent Contractor. She has most recently worked as a Research Scientist specializing in teacher preparation, early literacy, and reading difficulties like dyslexia at the Collaborative for Student Growth at NWEA and a Teacher Educator at the University of Georgia in the Dyslexia Master's Program. Dr. Peltier is now the Lead Learning and Delivery Specialist in Literacy at NWEA.

With expertise in reading instruction and assessment, special education, cognitive science, teacher training, and learning difficulties like dyslexia, Tiffany has publications in a wide range of research and practitioner journals. Continually disseminating research findings through her blog and other social media platforms, she draws from a vast body of expertise and research to identify common misconceptions and promote high-impact practices to accelerate stakeholder and student learning.

DOES THE STUDENT FIT THE CURRICULUM OR DOES THE CURRICULUM FIT THE STUDENT?

Kelli Sandman-Hurley, Ed.D.
Dyslexia Training Institute

ABSTRACT

This article describes what an expert dyslexia advocate should know in order to be effective. That is followed by a discussion of what is appropriate according to IDEA and how an expert advocate can navigate that term. Lastly, a philosophical discussion about direction of fit in the dyslexia advocacy world is proposed.

KEY WORDS

dyslexia, advocacy, IDEA

To advocate means to add your voice. Usually, those who advocate are moved by an event or experience to try to confront injustices. People often ask me why I founded the Dyslexia Training Institute. The answer is simple, adult literacy. I started my career in the adult literacy world at READ/San Diego and then subsequently spent 12 years there. Those 12 years impacted my life forever. It was there that hundreds of adults shared their stories about how low literacy had impacted their lives. Many shared their shame, their frustration, and their anger. They were angry at a system that allowed them to fall through the cracks and prevented them from reaching their life goals. Over the years it became painfully obvious that most of their literacy struggles were a direct result of undiagnosed, and unremediated, dyslexia. This experience motivated me, and continues to motivate me, to advocate in order to prevent those who are currently in school from being an adult sitting across the table from me at an adult literacy program, in tears. I advocate for those adults every single time I advocate for a k-12 student.

But what does it take to be an effective dyslexia advocate in a world where everyone is a google expert? Where there is no shortage of short, cute videos on Instagram. When a concerned parent googles dyslexia or goes down the social media rabbit hole it can become an endless barrage of advice. Advocacy is an unregulated profession that can create a wild west situation, but there are ways for parents to avoid the stress of wondering if the advice they are being given is based in expertise.

Advocating for a student with dyslexia can be extremely complex and requires that the advocate have a high level of expertise in the subject matter – it is arguably a situation when the advocate should be a specialist, because it requires educating everyone involved about what dyslexia is, what dyslexia is not and what is appropriate – *for the student at hand*. Below are some qualities that make an advocate a good fit for your student with dyslexia, or suspected dyslexia. Stay tuned until the end for a philosophical idea that every advocate might want to consider.

AN EXPERT ADVOCATE KEEPS A KEEN EYE ON THE *INDIVIDUAL* PART OF IDEA.

Anyone who has even been in a social media dyslexia group, or attended a dyslexia-related presentation, has probably witnessed the inevitable question from a desperate parent or teacher, what works? What usually follows is a tsunami of advice – and most of that advice includes some iteration of 'It has to be this or that program'. While this advice is most likely given with the best of intentions, it is a little irresponsible. Dyslexia presents differently in each and every student. The fact is, we cannot know what is appropriate for the student in question until we do a deep dive into the individual situation of that student. An expert advocate will gather as much information about the student as possible, including any assessments, work samples, report cards, teacher observations, parent/guardian interview and anything else of relevance before determining what is appropriate. They will take into account

the age of the child, any previous interventions, and comorbid conditions and then, and only then, will they make a recommendation about what services to request from the school. Will it be under the umbrella of 'Structured Literacy'? Probably, yes. But what that looks like will vary from student to student. An expert advocate will not advocate for the same thing for each and every student.

WHAT IS QUALIFYING CONDITION EXPERTISE?

It is true that a regulatory system does not exist to regulate who calls themselves an expert or an advocate, let alone an expert advocate. The dictionary defines an expert as 'a person who has a comprehensive and authoritative knowledge of or skill in a particular area.'(www.dictionary.com retrieved on April 25, 2024). In the space of dyslexia advocacy an advocate should have expertise in the area of dyslexia – beyond their own experience and beyond a singular experience with their child. I said it. But why? First, specializing in the advocacy for students with dyslexia can easily fill every day of the year. Second, it is tremendously difficult to advocate in this space. There is so much misinformation, disagreement, and gray area around and about dyslexia that it necessitates expertise and specialization. It necessitates confidence.

An expert advocate in the space of dyslexia will have significant knowledge in the following areas:

- Definition of dyslexia (especially which definition the state they are advocating in has adopted, if they have adopted it all).
- A deep knowledge of the components of structured literacy, which includes how to describe structured literacy and how to differentiate it from other approaches, and why it is important.
- The ability to define, understand and operationalize the following terms. They will also be able to identify which of the following areas the student needs at the time of the advocacy and how to address areas of weaknesses with appropriate strategies:
  - Phonemic Awareness – What is a phoneme?
  - Phonological Awareness – How is this different than phonemic awareness?
  - Decoding (reading) – How it this different than phonological awareness?
  - Encoding (spelling) – How do we teach this different than decoding? Why is it important?
  - Morphology – What is a morpheme? Why is it important to teach?
  - Syntax – What is syntax?
  - Semantics – What is semantics?
- The ability to address misinformation about dyslexia during meetings and in written correspondence.
- An understanding of common accommodations for students with dyslexia and how to articulate why they are necessary for the student (remember this is an individu al) they are advocating for.
- Be well-read and familiar with common interventions that schools might offer. Then be able to explain, with data and references, why it is, or is not, appropriate for the student they are advocating for.

WHAT IS AN (EXPERT) ADVOCATE?

The struggle is real for parents of students with dyslexia who are tirelessly trying to get public schools to acknowledge the existence of dyslexia and then understand and/or acknowledge what an appropriate remediation is for a student with dyslexia. This is where the expert ad-

vocate can help. Dyslexia advocates will have a deep understand of IDEA and Section 504, but more importantly, they will understand how to apply them in a situation where a student is struggling with reading and spelling. For example, what is 'appropriate instruction' and what is 'appropriate' for each individual student?

Parents and caregivers of school-age students with disabilities, and in particular, dyslexia, often find themselves questioning the appropriateness of the services provided by the public school system to their children. This uncertainty arises when the student fails to make progress that would be expected of a student with average to above-average intelligence and only struggle with reading and spelling, which is a pretty accurate description of a student with dyslexia.

When this happens, parents request to have their child assessed and then attend an Individualized Education Program (IEP) with a team of professionals from the school and the district. The purpose of the meeting is to use the data from the assessment (if it was granted) to determine the student's strengths and weaknesses and create a plan that is reasonably calculated so that the student will make the progress she needs to make in order to access the curriculum. At the heart of these meetings, and what tends to be the most debated topic during said meetings, is determining what is appropriate for that student. However, in the case of students with dyslexia,a team who agrees on what is appropriate is rare.

HOW IS APPROPRIATE 'DEFINED' IN IDEA

Although there is not a specific description of what an *appropriate* education is in the form of an identification of a specific program or strategies, the IDEA does define it the following way:

An *appropriate* education may comprise of education in regular classes, education in regular classes with the use of related aids and services, or special education and related services in separate classrooms for all or portions of the school day. Special education may include specially designed instruction in classrooms, at home, or in private or public institutions, and may be accompanied by related services such as speech therapy, occupational and physical therapy, psychological counseling, and medical diagnostic services necessary to the child's education.

An appropriate education will include:

- education services designed to meet the individual education needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students are met;
- the education of each student with a disability with non-disabled students, to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the student with a disability;
- evaluation and placement procedures established to guard against misclassification or inappropriate placement of students, and a periodic reevaluation of students who have been provided special education or related services; and
- establishment of due process procedures that enable parents and guardians to:
    - receive required notices;
    - review their child's records; and
    - challenge identification, evaluation, and placement decisions.

What is appropriate is intentionally vague. And all of this discussion about what is appropriate brings us to the idea of "Direction of fit" which is a concept often discussed in philosophy, particularly in the philosophy of language and mind. It refers to the relationship between a mental state or attitude and the world.

There are two main types of direction of fit:

Mind-to-World (M-to-W): In this type, the mind's representation or belief is expected to

conform to the world. That is, the mental state is adjusted or changed to match the way the world is. For example, when someone forms a belief about the weather being rainy outside, their mental state (belief) is expected to match the reality of the rainy weather.

World-to-Mind (W-to-M): In this type, the world is expected to conform to the mind's representation or desire. Here, the mental state guides or influences how the person perceives or interacts with the world, potentially leading to actions aimed at bringing the world into alignment with the mental state. For example, a person who desires to be healthier may engage in actions such as exercising and eating well to make the world (their health) match their mental desire.

Understanding direction of fit is important in various philosophical discussions, such as debates and advocacy. It helps to clarify how mental states relate to the world and how they shape our understanding and interaction with reality. There is space in the education and advocacy world for this discussion of direction of fit. I propose that advocates observe how the education system is proposing to help the student in order to understand how to proceed. It can be one of two ways.

Student to Curriculum (S-to-C): In this type, the student is expected to conform (fit) to the curriculum. This usually happens when the school in question has already purchased, committed to or pledged allegiance to a particular curriculum for all of their struggling students.

Curriculum to Student (C-to-S): In this type, the school is expected to respond to the student's individual needs. This usually happens when the team has reviewed the individual data and, as a team, determined how to create, or supply, a curriculum that fits the student's documented needs.

I often think of this idea when I am advocating. Is the education system trying to make the student fit the curriculum they have or are we adhering to what is appropriate and finding a way to make the curriculum fit the student. This should be at the top of every advocate's mind in every meeting and it should be brought to the surface and discussed. Parents and advocates often believe that once the child is diagnosed with dyslexia, what is appropriate is a specific program, and then they request the program by name. However, dyslexia does present differently in each and every student and what might be appropriate varies from case to case, which supports the decision by Congress and the Supreme Court to stop short ofdefining it. It turns out that what is appropriate is actually what is individualized and an expert advocate will make sure that happens.

Kelli Sandman-Hurley, Ed.D. is the author and founder of the Dyslexia Training Institute. She is a national speaker, advocate and expert witness for students and their families. Dr. Kelli has studied multiple Dyslexia Structured Word Inquiry (SWI), the Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach, Lindamood-Bell, RAVE-O and Read Naturally. She co-created and produced "Dyslexia for a Day: A Simulation of Dyslexia," as well as writing the well-received books, Dyslexia Advocate! How to Advocate for a Child with Dyslexia within the Public Education System, Dyslexia & Spelling: Making Sense of it All and The Adult Side of Dyslexia.

Dr. Kelli earned a Doctorate in Literacy with a specialization in dyslexia from San Diego State University and the University of San Diego. Her love of language led her to earn an additional MA degree in Linguistics from San Diego State University as well as a TESOL certificate from UC San Diego.

Why Are Our Children Not Reading at Grade Levels?

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Summary

Reading problems, particularly, at the elementary schools are a growing concern in the United States, since about 33% of the fourth graders are not reading at their grade level. This percentage may be as high as 66% in low socio-economic status (SES) schools and inner-city schools. Various reasons have been proffered for this poor state of affairs despite the fact that evidence-based remedial procedures to combat the problem are available. We explored these reasons, particularly the teacher knowledge of evidence-based, systematic instruction and the related linguistic concepts necessary to teach reading, both at the university and the elementary school levels, as well as the textbooks used in pre-service reading education courses. We found that both the university professors and the pre-service and in-service teachers lacked the knowledge about the evidence-based literacy instruction, and the textbooks used also did not provide sufficient information about the scientific study of literacy instruction.

Introduction

Ability to read and write, defined as the literacy skills, are important for a person's well-being and are considered very basic for survival, so much so that failure to develop adequate literacy skills, especially at early grade levels, can have serious consequences on the well-being of the individual later. According to Lyon (2001), about 85% of individuals in the juvenile delinquent system are functionally illiterate, and 75% of students who drop out of high schools have serious reading problems. Further, 70% of these individuals in the delinquent system return to the system again with no literacy help given, but only 16% return when literacy help is provided to these individuals, thus showing the power of literacy (Begin to Read, n.d.). This unfortunate state of affairs led to the nation's premier health monitoring agency, the National Institute of Health (NIH), to proclaim illiteracy a "national public health issue" (Lyon, 2001; McCardle & Chhabra, 2004).

Why is this sad state of affairs persisting for the past fifty years or so despite the overwhelming availability of scientifically based evidence to successful beginning reading instruction? The Nation's Report Card of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) has been publishing the performance in reading, math, and other subject areas of students in 4th and 8th grades every four to five years (except during the pandemic) for the past fifty years or so. According to the latest report (NAEP, 2022), the reading scores of both 4th and 8th grade students are actually lower than the previous evaluation of 2019 and are actually similar to what they were in 1992 and earlier. So, we wanted to explore this mystery of reading crisis in the U. S. schools in a scientific way by examining the knowledge of the college faculty members as well as of the in-service teachers on the fundamental knowledge required to teach explicit systematic instruction of literacy instruction as well as the content covered in the textbooks used in the reading instruction in the university undergraduate classes.

Teacher Knowledge of Basic Language Constructs

To explore the first option of teacher knowledge of the instructors both at the university and elementary school levels, we developed a 60-item

survey based on the earlier works of Moats, Cunningham, and McCutchen. This survey did go through the proper scrutiny of rigorous standardization and met the standard. This information is available in our earlier publications, and interested persons can refer to them. The survey had a reliability of 0.92 (Cronbach's alpha) and was further validated through Confirmatory and Exploratory Factor Analyses (Binks-Cantrell, Joshi, & Washburn, 2012).

The survey was administered to 98 university instructors of reading education courses. The majority of participants had a doctorate degree, had elementary school teaching experience, and were teaching 2-4 courses per semester in the university. Their surveys were evaluated for accuracy, and the results showed that the participants performed fairly well on the items relating to number of syllables in a word. However, when it came to identifying the types of syllables in a word, such as open or closed syllables, only 60% of the participants could answer correctly. The most surprising findings were on the items such as the principles of when the letter "c" makes the /k/ or /s/ sound (the sound represented is generally written within / /); identifying the number of morphemes in words like frogs, teacher, and observer; and only 15% of the participating university faculty members could name all the five components outlined by National Reading Panel (NRP) (2000). When these university faculty members were given professional development in the science of reading, their performance on the teacher knowledge survey increased. Interestingly, when the knowledge on linguistic concepts was assessed of the pre-service and in-service teachers, their performance reflected those of their university faculty members. This we have called "Peter Effect" after the biblical parable, when a beggar asked the apostle, Peter, "Give me some money,"" to which Peter replied, "How can I give you any money when I myself don't have any?" Applied to our teacher knowledge findings, university professors cannot give information about the science of reading when they themselves do not have that information. And classroom teachers cannot give the information about explicit, direct, and evidence-based instruction when they themselves don't have that information.

Do Textbooks Provide the Needed Information?

We also examined the information provided in the textbooks used in the reading education classes at the university teacher education programs. To obtain this information, we contacted eight textbook publishers who publish popular textbooks for reading education courses to give us the names of their best selling textbooks, which resulted in a total of 17 books. The following questions were examined in each of the textbooks: Does the book address all the five components, outlined by NRP? If so, are the definitions of the components, like phonemic awareness, accurate? And, finally, how much of each component was covered by the textbooks?

The results were again very disturbing. Of the 17 books examined, four textbooks did not cover all the five components of NRP. Unfortunately, the most common topic left out was phonemic awareness, which is basic for beginning reading instruction. Further, of the 13 textbooks that had covered all the five components of NRP, three textbooks gave the wrong definitions of the terms, especially of phonemic awareness and graphemes; defining phonemic awareness as the relationship between letters and sounds; and graphemes defined as a

single letter in English comprising of 26 letters or 26 graphemes. This, obviously, is incorrect information as there are about 200 graphemes in English orthography. We also analyzed the percentage of the textbooks devoted to the five components recommended by NRP, and this percentage ranged from 4% to 60%. When individual components were analyzed, it was found that phonological awareness and phonics covered less than 5% of the textbooks while comprehension covered more than 13%. Even though the ultimate goal of reading is comprehension, systematic and explicit instruction in phonological awareness and phonics is necessary to read with comprehension. Still, they were not given much prominence, and sometimes either were neglected in many textbooks or incorrect information was given.

Because we know quality classroom instruction is the best weapon against reading failure (Snow, Buns, & Griffin, 1998), we must do a better job of preparing and maintaining teachers who have the knowledge and ability to deliver just that. Teacher education programs must ensure that their teachers are provided with up-to-date information about research-based reading instruction, both during their initial teacher preparation (e.g., in the Colleges of Education and Alternative Certification Programs) and throughout their career (e.g., professional development opportunities). Moats likened the teaching of reading to rocket science (1999). Spending millions of dollars on curriculum programs that are thrown out every few years is not the answer. Producing and maintaining a more knowledgeable and better prepared teaching force is the most important challenge for the education field to undertake. Our students deserve no less. Additionally, pre-service teachers should be provided with evidence-based practices in university teacher preparation programs, and textbooks used in these programs should also provide such practices.

Conclusion

We know that quality classroom instruction is the best weapon against the chronic reading problem (Snow, et al., 1998). Teacher education programs must make sure that their pre-service teachers are provided with good evidence-based systematic and explicit instruction in the five components outlined by the National Reading Panel, and naturally, the university professors must be held accountable for preparing quality teachers in the university. Further, the textbooks must be carefully prepared and examined to ensure that the current evidence-based practices are carefully included in the textbooks. We have the materials to combat the reading crisis; we just need to incorporate them in the university schools of education consistently and to make sure that the textbooks provide accurate information and cover all the components of National Reading Panel. After all, teaching reading is rocket science, or as Dr. Donald Langenberg, Chair of the National Reading Panel (2000), said after NRP's report was published, "As a physicist chairing this panel for two years and preparing this report, I have come to realize that teaching reading is really much harder than rocket science!"

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About

Dr. R. Malatesha Joshi is the Regents Professor and University Professor of Literacy Education and Educational Psychology in the School of Education and Human Development at Texas A&M University and the editor of Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal. Dr. Joshi's research has contributed to our general understanding of the causes and consequences of literacy developments of all children and the important role the university schools of education can play in solving the reading puzzle. He has received many national and international awards such as Erasmus Mundus fellowship from Germany and Samuel and June Orton Award from the International Dyslexia Association. He is a fellow of the American Educational Research Association and was recently elected to the Reading Hall of Fame.

CREATING ACCESS TO HIGHER-LEVEL TEXT TO ENGAGE YOUNG, ADOLESCENT, AND ADULT DYSLEXIC READERS IN SCHOOLS AND PRISONS: PROVIDING A WORD-LEVEL SCAFFOLD TO IMPROVE WIDE READING IN CONTENT AREA TEXT AND LITERATURE

Sarah K. Blodgett

This article discusses an innovative, simple-to-use word-level scaffold that has been used by structured literacy specialists and prison educators since 2016 to encourage and enhance wide reading among striving, dyslexic, and ELL readers, taking them beyond decodable text reading while building overall reading skill. It will explore its development and effectiveness for students reading at the third-grade level and above, and how it enhances reading fluency and accuracy to support comprehension, ease of reading, and enjoyment. It will also provide information on the ***free*** *tools available to make use of the methodology, including a supplementary multicomponent intervention in which it is embedded.*

THE PROBLEM

According to the National Action Plan for Adult Literacy, more than half (54%) of American adults read below a sixth-grade level, and of the nearly 2 million Americans incarcerated today, 70% struggle with low literacy skills (Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, 2021). One landmark study tested and assessed 145 incarcerated men and women to determine relative rates of dyslexia among prison populations. It found that almost half (47%) of the inmates had dyslexia, while another 17% were cognitively impaired (Cassidy et al, 2021). Per the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), only 33% of American 4th graders and 31% of 8th graders read at a proficient level (The Nation's Report Card, 2022). For students with disabilities, the lowest achieving subgroup tested by NAEP, the number of proficient readers in this group is less than 10%, making students with disabilities the most at-risk subgroup in the United States (National Center for Educational Statistics, 2023). Clearly, this is not just an education issue but a social justice and economic issue as well. The question: is there an untapped area we can target to improve outcomes outside of explicit literacy instruction?

According to Archer et al (2003, p. 89), "a large number of secondary students read between the 2.5 and 5.0 grade level. What separates many of these students from their higher performing peers is their inability to read multisyllabic words and to read fluently."And according to Nagy et al (1984), "from fifth grade on, it is estimated that the average student encounters 10,000 words per year that they have never previously encountered in print." So, a second question is: outside of advanced word study, is there another way to support these students and individuals? Is there a tool available to "hold" them while they encounter more sophisticated words as they learn and engage with the world – a bridge to take them beyond foundational reading skills and decodable text reading?

I believe scaffolding text holds great promise. In this article, I provide a brief background on the purpose and creation of a word-level scaffold. I then share some updates on several research studies that have used it as part of a reading intervention that has been tested on adolescents and adults with reading disabilities, including dyslexia.

AN INNOVATIVE SOLUTION: PROVIDING A SCAFFOLDED TEXT METHOD

My journey started over 20 years ago when I discovered my son struggling to learn to read in elementary school. Luckily, I was able to find Dr. Miriam Cherkes-Julkowski at the University of Connecticut, a highly regarded diagnostician, consultant, and expert in structured literacy and learning. She prescribed a structured

literacy program that emphasized the linguistic and orthographic rime (as in “-ink” in “sink” and “-unk” in “chunk”). The program was explicit, systematic, not rule-oriented, and concrete. It made critical word patterns visible in a simple, organic way (Cherkes-Julkowski, 2005). It enabled my son to decode simple words and multisyllabic words efficiently. At the end of the program, he was a solid 4th grade reader. However, he didn’t become a wide reader as I expected; reading higher-level books made him tired. Dysfluency would set in after a few minutes of reading. When he encountered words he didn’t recognize readily, he would have to slow down, break the word into parts, decode, and move on. This dysfluency affected his will to read and his ability to comprehend what he was reading.

This phenomenon, I discovered, is a very common problem among historically struggling readers. Since I was attuned to making patterns visible to him throughout his prescribed intervention, I intuitively went into his higher-level books and began segmenting syllables with a pencil. This simple intervention of marking syllables with a vertical line gave my son a strategy for decoding complex text. Not only did he become a fluent reader, but he also started to enjoy wide reading. I gave him a set of “training wheels” for advanced reading.

For years that simple fix stayed with me. I knew that the ability to segment syllables was a key component of efficiently decoding higer-level text. I also recognized that there were a lot of kids (and adults) stuck at the 4th-grade reading level, when academic vocabulary and text become more complex. I believed my technique could help students and provide a bridge beyond decodable text reading into fluent wide authentic reading. Thus, I turned to Dr. Cherkes-Julkowski once again. Under her guidance and based on my own years of research and experimentation with striving readers, I created a word-level scaffold to scale the technique to make it available for ALL readers, to give everyone that same HUGE boost. I embedded what I knew about structured literacy into the text, while also using cross-linguistic research to inform my design, i.e., to simulate an easier writing system. Since English is extremely complex compared to most other languages, my goal was to make the scaffolded text simple and intuitive, just like simpler orthographies.

See the sample text below.

Word Level Scaffolding

Nota**bly**, **Eng**lish has a **com**plex **syl**la**ble struc**ture; thus, yo**u**’ll **no**tice we ma**k**e **syl**la**ble** brea**k**s **ob**vi**ous** whi**l**e **keep**ing words **in**tact. As well, **pre**dicta**b**le **wri**ting **sys**tems have cl**e**ar **vow**el i**d**enti**fi**ers. **There**fore, we **ac**cen**tu**ate the long **vow**el, **sim**ilar to an **a**c**u**te **ac**cent mark **u**sed in **man**y **trans**pa**r**ent **sys**tems.

HOW THE SCAFFOLDED METHOD WORKS

Many structured literacy programs offer a mechanism for students to mark monosyllabic and multisyllabic words with the instructor, providing them with a strategy to decode unknown words. Outside of decodable texts, however, there is no additional support for “application and transfer” of these mechanisms for wide reading.

There are approximately 470,000 words in the English language (Mirriam-Webster, 2024). Due to the complexity of English, a lot of students “check out” at the 4th grade reading level. Many students are dysfluent in higher -level reading due to the increased burden of tier 2 and 3 words – many of them multisyllabic – which affects learning in all subject areas.

The method I am describing here provides a built-in strategy, scaffolding structure into print, enabling students to see critical orthographic sound patterns (rimes, syllables, and long vowels) to help facilitate orthographic mapping. This increases their fluency, stamina, and confidence, while continually building their overall reading skill.

This method subtly highlights these patterns while keeping words intact. Thus, it is intuitive, requiring minimal to no instruction. It can be applied to any font, anchoring students to the text and sharpening their focus while eliminating the habit of guessing unknown words and enhancing print-to-speech mapping. This enables teachers to adapt instruction and texts for students with weaknesses in fluency and decoding, which are often associated with dyslexia, working-memory issues, attention, executive function, processing speed, or simply learning English as a new language. Perhaps most important, our recent research with adults in incarcerated settings shows that this scaffolded method can also impact motivation to read when it is embedded in a multi-component reading intervention (See Mariage, Hicks, & Clemente, in press).

In summary, this method provides an assistive technology to alleviate the cognitive load required for deep reading, and it is a teaching device that can be used inside or outside the classroom.

EARLY ADOPTERS: STRUCTURED LITERACY SPECIALISTS

When the method was formally released in 2016 in a set of chapter books, I noticed that structured literacy specialists were the first to use them with their students. One of these early adopters was Rhode Island Tutorial and Educational Services (RITES), a well-known not-for-profit clinic of 40 highly trained Orton Gillingham teachers. RITES separately compiled a report assessing this method among OG and Wilson-trained teachers on 23 dyslexic students, ages 12 to adult. During and after using this method with students, teachers observed:

- 95.7% of their students showed an increase in fluency and accuracy.

- 87% of their students showed an increase in stamina and endurance.

- 73.9% of their students showed improvement in reading comprehension.

- All the students learned to use the method quickly.

Teacher comments about the scaffolded text included:

"Student was more at ease and was more willing to decode more challenging words."

"Noticeable difference in her fluency, expression and accuracy while reading the scaffolded passages."

"Student was very resistant to reading aloud. As time went on and he became more accurate, he wanted to monopolize all the reading in class!"

(Rhode Island Tutorial & Educational Services, 2020)

According to RITES, two of the students observed were older adults. The scaffolded text enabled them to read their first chapter book, a profound experience for both of them.

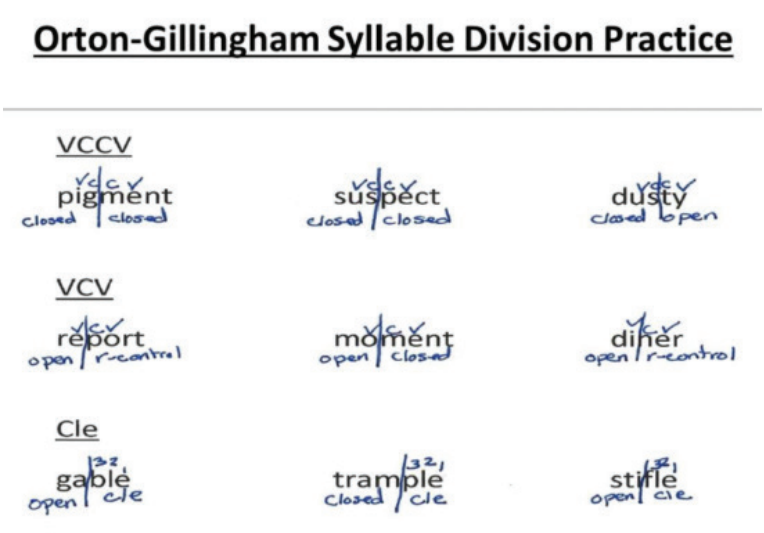
In a separate study conducted by researchers at Michigan State University (See Mariage, Hicks, & Clemente, 2021; Mariage, Hicks, & Clemente, in press) in conjunction with New Century Education Foundation, RITES was able to isolate the impact of the scaffolded text compared to plain text. This study consisted of eight middle school students (7 dyslexic, 1 struggling reader). On average, the students read 15.25 more words per minute with the scaffolded text compared to plain text, and they read the scaffolded passages with fewer errors (Mariage, Hicks, & Clemente, 2021).

Lisa Bigney is the founder and co-director of RITES; she is also a certified dyslexia interventionist and former special education teacher with decades of experience. Here is her explanation, followed by a visual, on how this word-level scaffolding tool fits into a structured literacy program:

"Below is a slide showing typical work done in an Orton Gillingham structured literacy lesson by a student. The student has learned how to divide different syllables in order to break the word apart to read with increased accuracy. The student is also identifying the syllable type, so they can ascertain the sound of the vowels when reading the words. Teaching students to markup words is an important part of many structured literacy programs. Often students who have done a lot of this syllable work in their structured literacy training, still struggle with "transferring and applying" these skills that they have learned to reading school texts. Using this scaffolding tool helps with the transfer of these skills to reading texts. The syllables are already divided by bolding and the vowels with long vowel sounds are underlined.

This scaffolding system supports the work students have learned about breaking apart words into syllables. It transfers this knowledge to reading authentic text in the real world instead of just using controlled readers. It allows students to apply the skills they have learned in their structured literacy lessons to novels and school texts. Using the scaffolded text reduces the cognitive load and the working memory students have to deal with when reading, allowing for increased comprehension of what they are reading. It's also allowing students to be exposed to more vocabulary by expanding what they can read. Also, reading this scaffolded text, models speech more efficiently than stopping to mark up or divide words, giving students the ability to practice reading more smoothly, to increase their fluency. For students who don't have the opportunity to have structured literacy training or for Multi language learners, it can help them read text right away when they might not have been able to approach the same reading in plain text, thus increasing their literacy skills by exposing them to higher levels of vocabulary and ideas

(Blodgett & Bigney, 2023)."



Devin M. Kearns and Matthew J. Cooper Borkenhagen recently published an article in The Reading Teacher entitled "Following the Rules in an Unruly Writing System: The Cognitive Science of Learning to Read English." They discuss various reading strategies that teachers recommend to students when they get stuck on a word, specifically ones that they believe require too much high-level conscious processing. They discuss the type of strategy that Lisa discusses above and ponder the conscious effort required. In one sense, the strategy is good because it focuses the student's attention on critical-word sound structure without taking their eyes away from print. However, there is a concern that it involves too much cognitive effort, impeding implicit learning, when it comes to wide reading (Kearns et al, 2024). Thus, I refer to Lisa's words: "reading this scaffolded text, models speech more efficiently than stopping to mark up or divide words, giving students the ability to practice reading more smoothly, to increase their fluency." In other words, the strategy is baked into the text, eliminating the cognitive load and disruption that this strategy would otherwise require during wide reading.

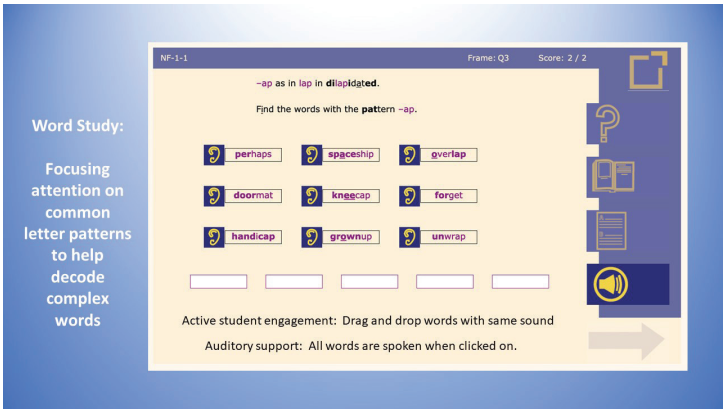
Under the name StrongReaderTM Builder from Noah Text®, we provide a free online conversion tool developed in 2021 to enable users to convert plain text into this scaffolded text. We recently made our browser extensions for Chrome and Mozilla that convert web pages into Noah Text® available for free as well.

These free tools can be accessed directly at www.noahtext.com under the "Software & Apps" tab. The method is patented; however, we make it available free of charge to individuals and teachers for noncommercial use. The free conversion tool has hundreds of users, mostly teachers. They generally use it to upload Word documents to scaffold poetry, short stories, articles, and worksheets. The browser extension can be used to scaffold most websites, including ones that provide high-interest news stories and informational text. The default setting for the font is Courier New, but we find most users set it to Verdana.

OUR SECOND WAVE OF EARLY ADOPTERS: CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

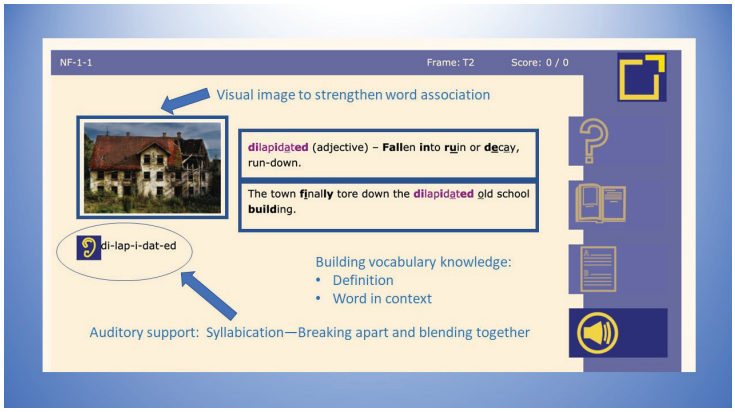
In 2017, our scaffolded books started to be used successfully in prisons in Adult Basic Education and ESL classes. In 2019, through our collaboration in prisons, we developed a partnership with New Century Education Foundation and researchers from the Michigan State University (MSU) College of Education. New Century Education is a not-for-profit organization that has been working with deeply underperforming students for decades, making its online Intelligent Tutoring System available for use in prisons, other institutions (including K12 schools), and for home use throughout the country. New Century provides a heavily researched and scientifically based reading and math curriculum for students performing between grades K and 10, including a highly adaptive synthetic phonics program.

Through our partnership, the team has developed a supplemental online multicomponent reading intervention for older students reading at the grades 3-7 level. The lessons are built around an engaging and meaningful fantsy -book trilogy about a young man who travels through time. We have created mini-lessons around each 3- to-7- page chapter that take approximately 30-45 minutes for students to complete. The text in the trilogy and the lessons are all scaffolded using our method to improve comprehension by supporting reading accuracy and fluency. The key lesson elements were developed to engage struggling older students in wide reading while immersing them in deep word study. This intervention has continually been studied through MSU and is currently being used in Adult Basic Education programs in Michigan and in prisons in Louisiana and Florida. Below is a brief sampling of the interactive lessons outlining their key components.

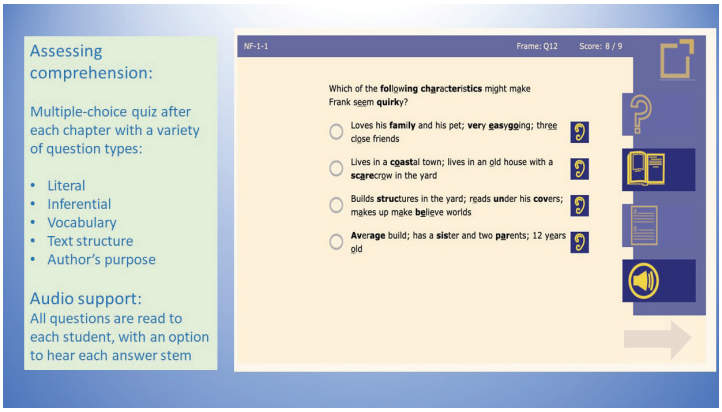


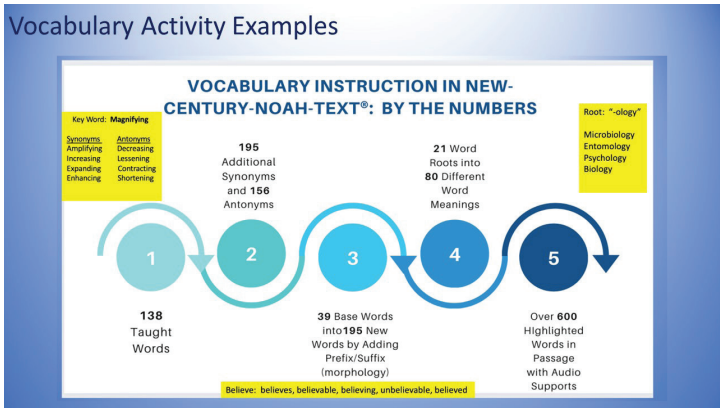
Phonological Awareness: Words are pronounced and rearticulated when clicked, and word patterns are enunciated with the student.

Phonics: The scaffolded method is used throughout the intervention to help students decode, while also highlighting key word patterns for further activities and practice.



Vocabulary: Key words are introduced with definitions supported by visuals, along with exercises in word roots, morphology, synonyms, and antonyms.





Comprehension: The lessons include pre-reading, reading and interactive close-reading exercises to help students develop better comprehension skills. Prompts are provided to focus students on a deeper understanding of the story and personal relevance of text. Audio support is available throughout, providing a warm human voice. The audio, coupled with the word-level scaffolding, provides a fully immersive experience to further bolster language and reading skills.

Fluency: The word-level scaffolding enables students to read more fluently, spending less cognitive effort on decoding so that they can understand more of what they are reading while building reading skills and enjoyment.

Social Emotional Learning: Lesson extensions are provided in which students may write in response to one or more stems connecting the story to their lives, thus providing opportunities for book club discussion and counseling through bibliotherapy to build executive function skills. Themes include dealing with disappointment, loss, planning, assessing personal strengths, peer pressure, resisting impulses, traditions, attitude, careers, and perspective-taking.

The online intervention consists of 72 lessons, including 60 that correspond to 18-21 short chapters per book and 12 additional vocabulary review lessons. In prison settings, we have found it to be highly effective for inmates who score between 460-550 on the TABE reading assessments. Below is additional information on the amount of word study it provides.

Several successful pilots conducted by New Century Education Foundation and MSU have been completed to date – in women's and men's prisons, high school and middle schools, and summer-camp settings. Students have consistently made substantial gains in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and oral reading fluency, while gaining confidence and enjoyment in wide reading. Notably, the pre- and post-testing data are all based on readings of plain text, indicating that the benefits or our method transfer to plain text reading. Also, we've noticed that students entering at grade 4 reading level and above require minimal to no teacher assistance when using the intervention.

A preview of the men's prison study was reported in Adult Literacy Education: *The International Journal of Literacy, Language, and Numeracy, in the Winter 2024 issue. The author states: "Leveraging digital tools, such as The Noah Text®-New Century Program, has the potential to enhance multiple areas of reading, and even more importantly for adult learners with dyslexia in incarcerated settings, build reading confidence, self-esteem, and increased motivation for lifelong learning (Cacicio, 2024)."*

Teacher comments after the two-month men's prison study included:

"It wasn't just reading...the men improved in math, science and social studies because they could both read and comprehend better."

"We had men who repeatedly failed to pass

the pre-test for the HiSET reading. After two months, we had men passing the pre-test and the HiSET with more than the minimal score."

(See Mariage, Hicks, & Clemente, 2022)

This online scaffolded intervention goes under the name New Century Noah Text® and is free for home use for any adult or child. It can be accessed at https://www.newcenturyeducation.org/dyslexia-solution.

Complete data on the men's prison study will be available by the time this article is published under the Journal of Correctional Education. Several other journal articles are expected to follow, including a recently completed single case study isolating the scaffolding method and analyzing its use with single words and non-words. Our team has larger pilots planned for later in 2024 and 2025.

IN THE CLASSROOM

To give you a sense of how you can incorporate the scaffolded method in your classroom and use it successfully in this setting, I'm including excerpts of a report on its use in "middle school reading intervention classrooms." The students used the scaffolded text in the trilogy of printed chapter books. (Keep in mind, we now have free tools enabling you to provide your own scaffolded material on any subject in any class.) The report was prepared by Amy Geary, a certified Wilson dyslexia therapist and certified IDA structured literacy dyslexia specialist. Here are excerpts of the report:

"Students in this first class were permitted to select books from the classroom library as their "independent" reader. Four students selected and read the entire trilogy of Franklin Noah Peterson utilizing the syllable and long vowel sounds. These students claimed that they had never been motivated to read a book on their own, much less a series. Three of these students borrowed the books from the classroom library for assignments in their general education classes.

"The second class provided one-to-one instruction for a student with Dyslexia. Sarah Blodgett's chapter books were teacher-selected to build the student's accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. With the scaffolded text and teacher feedback, her errors on vowel variant sounds were reduced as she became more accustomed to focusing her attention on the syllabication and vowel sounds. This student also opted to use this text for an assignment in her general education class.

"Students in this last class were required to read Sarah Blodgett's chapter books using the following method. They were given instruction to read a paragraph or page silently to themselves. Then, under the teacher's guidance, fluently scoop phrases while reading aloud. Through feedback and practice, reading errors were reduced, while accuracy and fluency increased. Classroom discussions permitted students to increase their comprehension through collaborative learning.

"All of the students who participated in reading books using Noah Text were enthusiastic to have a text that allowed them to read with ease. This increased their stamina and confidence, while reducing their reading errors. Students frequently commented that the use of the scaffolded text was beneficial (Geary, 2017, p. 1-2)."

CONCLUSION

By keeping words intact, the scaffolded text simulates a predictable writing system in which word patterns are more visible, providing young students with the ability to self-teach and succeed from an early age. Finland and Korea are two such examples of countries with predictable writing systems. As Mark Seidenberg indicates in the 2023 Houston Branch IDA Resource Directory, ***"most of the knowledge that supports skilled reading is not learned via explicit instruction. It is learned implicitly, without conscious attention, while we engage in activities such as reading and talking (Seidenberg, 2023, p. 17)."*** Yet the complex writing system we use in English can

hinder this independent engagement, so making text more accessible for self-teaching and implicit learning is a worthy cause. Interestingly, I found Mark Seidenberg's words to be similar to my mentor's, as Miriam Cherkes-Julkowski once told me: ***"you can't teach your way out of everything, it must come from the materials."***

By embedding and scaffolding word structure into text, it gives readers another avenue to gain additional exposure to critical word sound patterns to facilitate the long-term mapping of words. For some individuals, it takes **a lot** of exposure to solidify this mapping, whether due to reading disability, attentional issues, or some other language barrier. Our tool can be used short- or long-term. The important point is that it gets individuals to read – even the resistant ones.

This method can be used anywhere, exposing individuals to critical word sound structure, whether used alongside a structured literacy program, as a stand-alone, or in a supplemental multicomponent intervention as outlined above. Most importantly, for dyslexic readers, it can be included as a modification on IEPs or accommodation in 504 plans.

Now more than ever, the ability to discern information properly is critical for all of society. The ability to read and access print is a fundamental right that should be afforded to all citizens. Thus, we will continue to make word patterns more visible and to make our scaffolded method available to everyone so that ALL readers have the opportunity to actively engage in reading, to implicitly learn, and to succeed in life.

Note: In some areas of this article, the author switched out the name Noah Text® and replaced it with the "scaffolded text method and/or word-level scaffold" to deemphasize the commercial nature of the method, which teachers and parents can use free of charge through the tools available at noahtext.com.

CONCLUSION

Sarah K. Blodgett is the founder and creator of Noah Text®. She is a skilled researcher and writer who developed Noah Text® after working with her own child who struggled withreading. Her journey started in 2003 and was heavily influenced by Dr. Miriam Cherkes-Julkowski, an expert in learning and literacy. The Noah Text® patented method has received ongoing recognition from structured literacy specialists and education professionals since its release in 2016 and was selected as an Innovation Showcase Panelist by the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA), Education Business Forum, in 2017. Since 2019, Sarah has partnered with New Century Education Foundation and Michigan State University researching and developing specialized Noah Text® lessons for New Century's Online Intelligent Tutoring System. Sarah is continuing to expand Noah Text® technology tools and publications through partnership development. Her fervent mission is to make Noah Text® available in ALL print and digital media for ALL readers.

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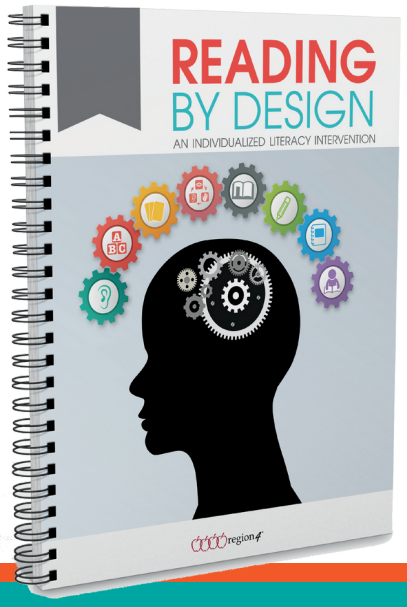

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