What Do Teachers Need to Know and Do to Improve Literacy Outcomes for Students with Dyslexia?

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Today’s Objectives

- Using the simple view of reading framework, review the definition of dyslexia and other types of reading difficulties
- Identify and describe principles of instruction that empower teachers to meet the needs of students with dyslexia in their classrooms
- Share examples of strategies to provide explicit, engaging, and scaffolded instruction
- Reflect on current practices and discuss steps school teams can take to intensify support for students who struggle with word reading in their classrooms
Simple View of Reading

Gough and Tunmer, 1986
What is Dyslexia?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Language Comprehension</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Word Recognition</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Typically Developing Reader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Dyslexic</td>
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</table>

Kilpatrick, 2015
What is Dyslexia?

• The term dyslexic is used to refer to students with adequate language comprehension, but weak word recognition (decoding) skills.
What is Dyslexia?

- a specific learning disability
- neurobiological in origin
- characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities
- difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language
- unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and provision of effective classroom instruction
- secondary consequences of reduced reading comprehension, growth of vocabulary and background knowledge

International Dyslexia Association, 2002
1. About 35% of US 4th graders read below the basic level

Life in 4th grade is tough if you read below basic.

Reading below basic means that we struggle to find relevant information, make simple inferences, identify details that support conclusions, and interpret meanings of words used in text.

The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) consistently finds that about 35% of US 4th graders read at a level that is below basic. So, in an average class of 24 4th graders, about 8-9 students cannot read at a basic level. Most are capable of learning to read at higher levels.
2. Children with dyslexia are in **every** classroom

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) estimates that **15-20%** of the population as a whole may have symptoms of dyslexia.

At least three of us probably have dyslexia AND read below basic.

Even using IDA’s conservative estimate (15%), as many as **3-4 students** in this 4th grade class may have symptoms of **dyslexia**. Most probably are among those reading **below** basic.

However, some students with dyslexia may read **above** basic and may not be identified for Special Education. They may be capable of much more, but struggle just to keep up.
3. We fail to meet the reading instruction needs of far too many children

We might be OK, but so many classmates are missing out!

Look how many of us are struggling and underperforming.

These students (above) might be doing OK (if we think OK is reading above NAEP’s most basic level and not struggling with dyslexia).

But all these students are underperforming and struggling, even though most are capable of doing better. We are NOT meeting their needs.

The consequences are harsh for these struggling students and for our nation!
Teaching a dyslexic child to read is based on the same principles used to teach any child to read. Since the neural systems responsible for transforming print into language may not be as responsive as in other children, however, the instruction must be relentless and amplified in every way possible so that it penetrates and takes hold.

Sally Shaywitz, Overcoming Dyslexia, 2004
What Do We Teach?

• 5 Essential Elements in Beginning Reading:
  
  • Phonemic Awareness
  • Phonics
  • Fluency
  • Vocabulary
  • Comprehension

National Reading Panel, 2000
What Do We Teach?

- Students with Dyslexia:
  - Phonemic Awareness – and to the advanced level
  - Highly explicit, systematic synthetic-phonics instruction
  - Ample application of these skills to reading text
  - Explicit spelling instruction (including instruction in common spelling generalizations and morphemic analysis)

Typical students as well as those with dyslexia benefit from this kind of instruction!
Principles of Instruction That Empower Teachers to Meet the Needs of Students with Dyslexia in Their Classrooms

How We Teach!
Consider this . . .

- We spend a lot of time focusing on the component skills in beginning reading, but very few teachers have the scope and sequence in their heads that allows them to be nimble with their instruction to respond to student needs.

- Programs have a lot of power. They are an important tool, but programs don’t teach children.

- The more intractable the learner, the more expertise the teacher needs to implement/adjust the program to meet the student’s needs.
Teachers Need:

- Fluent, automatic practices around the science of teaching and science of learning.
Large Group Share Out

What do you think are high leverage practices that allow teachers to be “nimble”?
HOW We Teach

Principles of Instruction

- Scaffold Instruction
- Explicit, Systematic Instruction
- Engaging Instruction
- Practice
- Feedback
Explicit, Systematic Instruction

Effective teachers do the following:

• Review previous learning and prerequisite skills
• Identify the objective to be learned
• Activate and build background knowledge
• Limit the amount of new information presented
Effective teachers also model or demonstrate procedures and processes:

- **I do it:**
  Teacher demonstrates.

- **We do it together:**
  Teacher does it while guiding students.

- **You do it together:**
  Students practice with teacher feedback.

- **We all do it together again:**
  Teacher does it again while guiding students.

- **You do it:**
  Students work independently.
Effective teachers also do the following:

- Provide examples and, when appropriate, nonexamples
- Maximize student engagement
- Check for student understanding
- Reteach when necessary
Scaffold Instruction

• Simple instructions
• Small steps
• Ask questions
• Provide specific feedback
Opportunities for Scaffolding

- Additional opportunities for students to practice independently or with teacher support?
- More (or less) manipulates, graphic organizers, and/or hands-on activities?
- Additional checks for understanding or clarifications of misunderstandings?
- Support connections being made across curriculums?
- Consistent positive and motivating feedback throughout the instruction?
Scaffolded Practice

- Provide opportunities to read aloud with texts that have many words with spelling patterns that will be familiar to students.
Scaffold Instruction

- Remember: The goal is for learners to become independent and no longer need the scaffold, so it should be faded out and taken away when students are ready.
An Example

Schema

Thinking about what you already know is called using your schema. A schema is all the knowledge that is already in your mind.

Examples:
- places you have been.
- things you have done.
- books you have read.
Word Identification Instruction

Systematically teaches students to apply knowledge of:

- Letter Sounds
- Spelling Patterns & Syllables
- Morphemes
Vowel Combinations

• Vowel combinations or pairs are two adjacent vowels in the same syllable that represent a single speech sound. The sound made by a vowel combination may vary.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OU sound</th>
<th>soup</th>
<th>could</th>
<th>shout</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Examples:
- soup
- shout
Scaffolded Practice: Spelling Patterns

<table>
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<th>oatmeal</th>
<th>List 1 oa</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>groan</td>
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<tr>
<td>throat</td>
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<td>roasted</td>
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Practice

• Teachers talk less so students can learn more!

• Reading requires lots of practice – reading words and reading connected text.

• Practice all aspects of instruction with feedback.
Example of Well-Designed Practice

Word Building Activities

• Use only letter sounds and word patterns that students have been taught.
• Letter tiles (or cards) should represent phonemes, not just the 26 letters.
• Teachers build words for students to read.
• Teachers can also dictate a series of patterned words for students to spell.
• Avoid phonetically irregular words.
• Use ample numbers of lower-frequency words that require students to apply decoding skills.
# Sample Word-Building Sequence

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<th>p</th>
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Feedback

- Let’s Give Instructive Feedback
- Let’s Give Immediate Feedback
- Let’s Give Feedback That Involves Follow-Up
- Let’s Give Feedback That Encourages
Feedback

• Let’s apply precision when giving feedback – build on what a student knows and fill in where a student does not know.
Example of Instructive Feedback

Sequence of Teacher Feedback to Students’ Decoding Errors in Text Reading:

- Allow a little bit of wait time
- Use pointing cues
- Follow up with verbal cues
- Model decoding the word
- Ask the student to reread the sentence
Engaging Instruction

- Students do most of the work
- Quick pace (move as fast as manageable)
- Avoid excessive teacher talk
- Meaningful discussion about text
Large Group Share Out

• Have you thought about these practices? Are you currently implementing them? Do you feel skilled in implementing them?

• What are some steps you can take to intensify support for students who struggle with word reading in your classrooms?
Discussions, Motivation, and Individualized Interventions

• All the previous strategies allow for opportunities to engage students in literacy learning.

• Additional individualized interventions may also be provided by quality specialists for struggling readers. The previous strategies may be taught in small group settings to increase the level of intervention and individualize instruction.
Remember . . . More Intensity for Students with Dyslexia!

• More instructional time
• A smaller group size
• Greater explicitness and scaffolding from the teacher