

HELP 2020 Summer Book Clubs  
DISCUSSION GUIDE  
(Created by Minnesota Academy of Reading)  
*Language at the Speed of Sight*

**BEFORE THE FIRST DISCUSSION GROUP MEETING:** Ask the participants to read **chapters 1-6** of Seidenberg, M. (2017). *Language at the speed of sight: How we read, why so many can't, and what can be done about it*. New York: Basic Books.

**DURING THE FIRST DISCUSSION GROUP MEETING:**

1. Use the following menu of questions or create questions of your own. **Select the questions that are the most relevant to your group.** You are not required to discuss all the questions provided. PLEASE NOTE: If your group would like to meet more than 2 times, please feel free to do so!
2. The goal of the Discussion Group is to stimulate conversation about the application of research to teacher preparation, professional learning, assessment, and reading instruction especially for striving readers and students with characteristics of dyslexia.
3. This should be a **discussion**, not a lecture. The group members should talk more than the leader!
4. If the group members do not know each other, plan a brief introduction activity for your first meeting.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 1:**

1. What are your previous experiences with students who struggle with reading or exhibit characteristics of dyslexia?
2. On pages 12-13, Dr. Seidenberg summarized “a science of reading.” Why is it important to consider these points when reflecting on reading instruction?
3. On page 16, the author wrote about the complex relationship between spoken and written language and connected five key ideas to current controversies related to education. Discuss each point and consider its impact on your understanding of effective literacy instruction.
4. In chapter 3, the author provided a historical perspective on the development of written language. How is this relevant to you in your role?
5. Chapter 4 explained research on eye movement and connected it to reading speed. What does this mean for reading instruction especially for students with reading difficulties and/or characteristics of dyslexia?
6. Chapter 5 described orthographic expertise (p. 92) and illustrated the predictable nature of written English. How does this information impact teaching and learning?

7. On pages 102-103, Dr. Seidenberg listed requirements for reading expertise. Discuss each factor for skillful reading. How is each factor currently being taught at your institution?
8. What were some things that surprised you as you read these chapters”?
9. What other research have you been reading that supports or adds to this information?

**BEFORE SESSION 2:** Ask participants to read **chapters 7-12.**

**DISCUSSION QUESTION FOR SESSION 2:**

1. In chapter 7, the author described the “eternal triangle” (pages 125-126). How do these questions impact teaching and learning? What is the connection between reading, writing, and spelling?
2. On page 153, Dr. Seidenberg defined dyslexia and in Table 8.1 on page 152 he listed some characteristics of dyslexic readers. How does this information align with your knowledge and experience with students who struggle with reading?
3. What other information in this chapter resonated with you? Why?
4. In chapter 9, the author summarized findings from brain research. He described “acquired dyslexia” (p. 190), “surface dyslexia” (p.192), “phonological dyslexia” (p. 195), and “deep dyslexia” (p. 196). What did you learn from this chapter and how does it apply to your position or experience?
5. Chapter 10 presented results from PISA and NAEP assessments over several decades. Dr. Seidenberg then called attention to the “black-white achievement gap” (p. 235). What in his discussion surprised you? What confirmed things you knew or have experienced? What other thoughts do you have?
6. Chapter 11 discussed why there are debates on how to teach reading and how to prepare teachers of reading. Do you agree or disagree with some of his points? Why or why not? What implications does this have on students’ literacy learning and development?
7. In chapter 12, the author presented some suggestions for future reform and change in literacy education and teacher preparation. What are your thoughts about these ideas? What could you apply to your situation? What else might need to be considered?
8. Based on the research and recommendations in this resource, what are some of the implications for changes within current literacy instruction, school-wide systems of assessment, and interventions? What are the implications for systems reform?
9. What are the implications for future professional learning for both in-service and pre-service teachers?
10. The HELP Planning Committee has invited Dr. Seidenberg to present a webinar on this topic in the fall of 2020. What questions would you like him to address about reading difficulties and dyslexia? Make a list of these questions and submit them on the Google Survey at: <https://tinyurl.com/HELPbookquestions>.