



EDUCATOR TRAINING INITIATIVES BRIEF

Structured Literacy™

An Introductory Guide

...even the most competent teacher cannot be successful in teaching reading, especially to children who are at-risk or struggling with literacy, if provided with inadequate instructional contexts or inappropriate instructional materials and approaches...

Teacher knowledge and skills matter, but so do appropriate approaches to instruction and intervention – approaches forged in scientific evidence. It is not the case, as is sometimes claimed, that a highly skilled, knowledgeable educator can teach reading effectively using literally *any* method. Even the most competent teacher cannot be successful in teaching reading, especially to children who are at-risk or struggling with literacy, if provided with inadequate instructional contexts or inappropriate instructional materials and approaches that do not lend themselves to effective teaching of important component literacy skills.

Moreover, without research-based instructional approaches and curricula, it appears that many teachers tend to overlook important components of reading and writing in instruction, including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, spelling, and writing processes such as planning and revision (Cunningham, Zibulsky, Stanovich, & Stanovich, 2009; Spear-Swerling & Zibulsky, 2014). Both capable teachers *and* research-based instructional approaches are necessary (e.g., Piasta et al., 2009).

Many investigators and research reports have focused on identifying important components of reading and writing (e.g., Adams, 1990; Berninger et al., 2006; Graham, MacArthur, & Fitzgerald, 2007; National Reading Panel [NRP], 2000; National Research Council [NRC], 1998), as well as on effective features of literacy instruction and intervention. There is general scientific agreement about what these effective features involve (e.g., Archer & Hughes, 2011; Brady, 2011; Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs, & Barnes, 2018; Foorman et al., 2016; McLeskey et al., 2017; NRP, 2000; NRC, 1998; Torgesen, 2004).

Basics of Effective Instruction

Successful literacy instruction and interventions, especially for at-risk students and those with reading disabilities, provide a strong core of highly explicit, systematic teaching of foundational skills such as decoding and spelling, as well as explicit teaching of other important components of literacy such as vocabulary, comprehension, and writing (Fletcher et al., 2018; Gersten et al., 2008; Graham et al., 2012; Torgesen, 2004).

Successful literacy instruction and interventions... provide a strong core of highly explicit, systematic teaching of foundational skills such as decoding and spelling skills, as well as explicit teaching of other important components of literacy such as vocabulary, comprehension, and writing.

- “Explicit” means that the teacher clearly explains and models key skills, with well-chosen examples; children are not expected to develop these skills based mainly on exposure and incidental learning opportunities.
- “Systematic” means that there is a planned sequence of instruction, with important prerequisite skills taught before more advanced skills, and with care taken not to introduce skills in a way that is unintentionally confusing. For instance, children are not expected to decode or spell complex words before they have learned to decode and spell simpler words; and teachers avoid introducing highly confusable phonics elements (such as *b* and *p*, or multiple short vowel sounds) simultaneously. Children also have ample opportunities to apply their developing skills in reading texts they are capable of decoding and comprehending.
- Educators screen students and monitor their progress, using data to promptly identify children who need help, as well as to inform core instruction and interventions. For example, if many children in a school or district need intervention for vocabulary weaknesses or decoding problems, this is a sign that core instruction in those areas requires more emphasis or improvement.

- Effective interventions provide many opportunities for students to respond and practice what they are learning, with the teacher providing clear, prompt, constructive feedback to students' errors.
- Assessments typically are used to help target specific skills that should be addressed for individual students (e.g., specific decoding skills such as those for short vowel words with consonant blends, or specific spelling skills such as rules for adding suffixes to a base word).
- Interventions should be appropriately intensive, with a greater level of intensity (e.g. smaller group size, more time in intervention) for children who are further behind their peers.

...some students with dyslexia have co-occurring disabilities such as ADHD that may also need to be addressed in intervention ...

Additional Considerations for Subgroups of Poor Readers

In addition to incorporating these features of effective intervention, interventions may also need to address or emphasize other areas for various subgroups of poor readers. For example:

Students with dyslexia often have significant difficulties with phonemic awareness (PA), sensitivity to individual sounds in spoken words and the ability to manipulate those sounds, as well as with other phonological processing skills (Fletcher et al., 2018; Vellutino, Fletcher, Scanlon, & Snowling, 2004).

Although beginning readers in general benefit from instruction in phonemic awareness (Foorman et al., 2016; NRP, 2000), difficulties with PA are central to many cases of dyslexia and may need particular emphasis in intervention for these children.

In addition, some students with dyslexia have co-occurring disabilities such as ADHD that may also need to be addressed in intervention – for example, by explicit teaching of organizational strategies for managing reading, writing, and other academic tasks.

Students with broad language disabilities have language impairments that extend beyond phonology to include other language areas such as semantics and syntax. In addition to addressing phonemic awareness and phonics, these students' interventions need to include these higher level areas of language.

...all children need instruction in vocabulary and language, but ELs often require an additional emphasis on those areas in general education instruction and in interventions (Baker et al., 2014).

English learners (ELs) may have weaknesses in English academic language and vocabulary knowledge due to lack of exposure, not disabilities. All children need instruction in vocabulary and language, but ELs often require an additional emphasis on those areas in general education instruction and in interventions (Baker et al., 2014). Of course, certain ELs may also have disabilities, and then their interventions need to be adjusted accordingly. For instance, like other students with dyslexia, an EL with dyslexia will likely benefit from systematic intervention in PA and phonics, but may also require intervention to address gaps in English vocabulary knowledge.

How Phonics Approaches Differ

Phonics involves knowledge of letter sounds and the ability to use that knowledge to decode unfamiliar *printed* words. With regard to phonics specifically, recent research has important implications for understanding the type of instruction that is most likely to be beneficial.

Approaches to phonics instruction vary not only in explicitness, but also in the size of the unit that is emphasized in initial instruction. The smallest-unit approaches focus from the start on individual phonemes (sounds) in words and the graphemes (letters/letter patterns) that represent them. Other phonics approaches have an initial focus on larger units such as onsets and rimes or whole words.

The former, smallest-unit phonics approaches are sometimes termed grapheme-phoneme level approaches (e.g., Brady, 2011).

Here are some examples of ways that the different phonics approaches mentioned previously would teach beginning readers to decode the unknown word *brick*:

- In a grapheme-phoneme level approach, children would learn to decode the word *brick* by learning the sounds for the letters (graphemes) *b*, *r*, *i*, and the letter pattern *-ck*, as well as how to blend the four sounds represented by those graphemes.
- In an onset-rime approach, the emphasis would be on somewhat larger units within words; to decode *brick*, children would learn sounds for the letter patterns associated with the onset *br-* and the rime *-ick*, and how to blend those two parts.
- In analogy phonics or a word families approach, the focus would be on whole words. Children would learn to read *brick* by comparison to a word they can already read, such as *sick*, or they would learn patterned words from a “family” such as *sick*, *stick*, *trick*, *pick*, and *brick*.

The NRP (2000) found that all of these phonics approaches were more effective than not teaching phonics at all or than relying only on incidental, unsystematic phonics, but it did not find a difference between larger-unit and smaller-unit phonics approaches.

However, post-NRP research (see Brady, 2011, for a review; also, Christensen & Bowey, 2005; Foorman et al., 2016) suggests that phonics instruction with an initial focus on grapheme-phoneme level relationships, rather than larger-unit phonics approaches, can lead to better reading outcomes, especially on more advanced code skills. After this initial focus, and as they learn to decode more complex types of words, children must also be taught about larger units in words such as common orthographic patterns (e.g., *igh*, *ea*, *ar*), as well as about morphology (i.e., word parts that carry meaning such as roots, prefixes, and suffixes).

...phonics instruction with an initial focus on grapheme-phoneme level relationships, rather than larger-unit phonics approaches, can lead to better reading outcomes ... After this initial focus, and as they learn to decode more complex types of words, children must also be taught about larger units in words ...

Structured Literacy™

Considered as a whole, all these features of effective instruction and intervention can be conceptualized under the general umbrella of Structured Literacy™, an approach to reading instruction where teachers carefully structure important literacy skills, concepts, and the sequence of instruction, to facilitate children’s literacy learning and progress as much as possible. This approach to reading instruction can be beneficial not only for students with reading disabilities, but also for other at-risk students including English learners and struggling adolescents (Baker et al., 2014; Gersten et al., 2008; Kamil et al., 2008; Vaughn et al., 2006).

Structured Literacy™ is an approach to reading instruction that can be beneficial not only for students with reading disabilities, but also for other at-risk students including English learners and struggling adolescents (Baker et al., 2014; Gersten et al., 2008; Kamil et al., 2008; Vaughn et al., 2006).

Structured Literacy™ is characterized by the provision of systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing and emphasizes the structure of language across the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), the relationships among words (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse.

The following instructional principles are hallmark features of a Structured Literacy™ approach to reading:

1. Instructional tasks are modeled and clearly explained, especially when first introduced or when a child is having difficulty.
2. Highly explicit instruction is provided, not only in important foundational skills such as decoding and spelling, but also in higher-level aspects of literacy such as syntax, reading comprehension, and text composition.
3. Important prerequisite skills are taught before students are expected to learn more advanced skills.
4. Meaningful interactions with language occur during the lesson.
5. Multiple opportunities are provided to practice instructional tasks.
6. Well targeted corrective feedback is provided after initial

student responses.

7. Student effort is encouraged.
8. Lesson engagement during teacher-led instruction is monitored and scaffolded.
9. Lesson engagement during independent work is monitored and facilitated.
10. Students successfully complete activities at a high criterion level of performance before moving on to more advanced skills.

Structured Literacy™ does not involve just one particular program or method...many well-known intervention programs and methods fall under the umbrella of Structured Literacy™...

Structured Literacy™ does not involve just one particular program or method. In fact, many well-known intervention programs, methods, and approaches fall under the umbrella of Structured Literacy™, such as the Wilson Reading System (Wilson, 1988), the Orton-Gillingham method (Gillingham & Stillman, 2014), the Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program (LiPS; Lindamood & Lindamood, 1998), and Direct Instruction (e.g., Carnine, Silbert, Kame'enui, & Tarver, 2009), as well as several other approaches (e.g., Birsh & Carreker, 2019).

While these programs and methods certainly differ from each other in various ways, they have much more in common with each other than with how literacy is often taught in general education settings and how it is taught in some intervention programs (Moats, 2017; Spear-Swerling, 2018).

Contrasting Structured Literacy™ with Typical Literacy Practices

Certainly, general education core programs vary in their approaches to literacy instruction, and some do use features of Structured Literacy™. Some children also will learn to read and write well regardless of how literacy is taught. Nonetheless, there is considerable room for improvement in the effectiveness of literacy teaching in the United States.

For example, the most recent (2017) scores for fourth-grade reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), showed that even in the state with the best scores in the nation, Massachusetts, 50% of children read below proficiency levels; nationwide, 63% of fourth-grade students scored below proficient levels on the 2017 NAEP in reading. For writing, the picture was even bleaker; nationwide, at all three grade levels tested (Grades 4, 8, and 12), 72% to 73% of students scored below proficient levels in writing. (See <https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/>).

The approaches used to teach literacy in many schools are especially poorly suited to children who have any vulnerability to literacy problems, whether those difficulties stem from an actual disability such as dyslexia or from experiential factors such as limited experience with English or limited home exposure to literacy.

Practices that are ***not*** aligned with Structured Literacy™ include the following:

- In many schools, important foundational literacy skills such as phonemic awareness, decoding and spelling may receive relatively little emphasis, even for beginners.
- The phonics approach used often emphasizes larger units such as word families, rather than a systematic grapheme-phoneme level approach for initial instruction.

... 63% of fourth-grade students scored below proficient levels on the 2017 NAEP in reading. For writing, the picture was even bleaker; nationwide, at all three grade levels tested (Grades 4, 8, and 12), 72% to 73% of students scored below proficient levels in writing.

If more schools adopted features of Structured Literacy™ in their general education programs, schools could help prevent or ameliorate many children’s difficulties with learning to read and write (Foorman et al., 2016; NRP, 2000).

- Activities that are completely useless for promoting growth in reading, such as attention to word configuration cues (i.e., the overall shape of a word), may be employed.
- Explicit teaching of higher-level components of literacy, such as syntax or text composition, may receive little attention.
- Instructional time spent in direct teacher-student interaction may be limited, with more time spent in cooperative groupings or independent work than direct instruction from a teacher.
- General educators usually give many assessments, but not necessarily the kinds of assessments useful for early identification of reading problems or for targeting instruction in foundational skills, such as criterion-referenced tests of decoding and spelling (with words organized into different phonics categories that increase in complexity).
- Instruction is not typically highly systematic, and in many areas, important prerequisite skills may not be consistently taught.
- In the early grades, children generally read predictable or leveled texts, which often contain many words that children cannot decode and which tend to encourage a guessing strategy based on pictures or sentence context, rather than facilitating application of decoding skills. These kinds of texts are common even in some interventions for poor readers (e.g., Clay, 1994; Fountas & Pinnell, 2009).

- When children read texts, even with a teacher, inaccuracies in decoding may be overlooked in the belief that errors are unimportant if they do not greatly alter meaning (e.g., reading *a* for *the*). However, inaccurate reading will make it difficult for children to build fluency; also, overreliance on context does not work well for more advanced texts and can become a difficult habit to break (Foorman et al., 2016).

If more schools adopted features of Structured Literacy™ in their general education programs, schools could help prevent or ameliorate many children’s difficulties with learning to read and write (Foorman et al., 2016; NRP, 2000). Tiered interventions used in some schools, including in some special education programs, also could be made more effective by incorporating key features of Structured Literacy™ such as intensive, systematic teaching of foundational literacy skills (e.g., Gersten et al., 2008).

...there is not an empirical basis to identify one particular Structured Literacy™ program or method as more effective than all others...However, these observations are not an argument for doing nothing. . .

Is One Particular Structured Literacy™ Program, Method, or Approach Preferable to All Others?

Especially for students who struggle in learning to read, Structured Literacy™ approaches are far preferable to the typical literacy practices used in many schools. However, currently there is not an empirical basis to identify *one particular* Structured Literacy™ program or method as more effective than all others, or as more effective for all children with a specific type of difficulty such as poor decoding, specific comprehension difficulties, dyslexia, or language disabilities.

Evidence is also lacking on many practical issues of concern to educators, such as exactly how much instructional time should be devoted to different components of literacy (e.g., in reading, key areas such as phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and language comprehension; in writing, foundational skills such as spelling, writing processes such as planning, text generation skills such as word choice and elaboration).

Furthermore, studies that have compared interventions varying in these and other important details have sometimes yielded very similar outcomes for children (e.g., Mathes et al., 2005; Torgesen et al., 2001). These kinds of findings, as well as the limited evidence on many specific details of intervention design and delivery, argue against an unyielding reliance on one particular program or method.

However, these observations are not an argument for doing nothing, implementing literacy practices known to be deeply flawed, or using a conflicting hodgepodge of programs and techniques. Rather, schools should select a Structured Literacy™ approach that best fits the needs of their specific population of students and available resources, including resources involving teacher professional development. IDA can work with schools to develop an implementation plan that is most effective for their community.

After implementing a Structured Literacy™ approach that is most appropriate for them, schools should use progress monitoring assessments to track student progress and gauge the overall success of instruction and intervention programs. They should make necessary adjustments in instruction and intervention on an ongoing basis. And they should follow emerging scientific evidence on literacy for new findings that may impact educational decision-making.

...the limited evidence on many specific details of intervention design and delivery, argue against an unyielding reliance on one particular program or method...

Additional Considerations for Selecting a Particular Structured Literacy™ Program, Method, or Approach

In addition to paying close attention to scientific research on reading and evidence-based practices, educators sometimes need to exercise judgment in making educational decisions, especially where evidence is lacking.

For instance, an intervention with a relatively greater emphasis on phonemic awareness, or multisyllabic word decoding, or fluency, may be more effective for a student with greater needs in one of those respective areas.

... some components of literacy may take longer to respond to intervention than others (e.g., accuracy vs. fluency of text reading), and ... patterns of assessment data are usually more meaningful than the results of a single assessment.

However, these kinds of judgments will differ across students and even for the same student over time, as a student's needs shift with progress in intervention.

To make and refine these instructional decisions, educators must have a broad knowledge base of the kind tapped by the Knowledge and Practice Examination for Effective Reading Instruction (KPEERI); and they should use appropriate progress-monitoring assessments to refine or change interventions as needed for individual students on an ongoing basis.

It should also be recognized that some components of literacy may take longer to respond to intervention than others (e.g., accuracy vs. fluency of text reading), and that patterns of assessment data are usually more meaningful than the results of a single assessment.

Treatment-Resistant Literacy Difficulties

Future studies should provide insights about successful ways to help children with the most serious, treatment-resistant literacy difficulties. For example, Compton, Miller, Elleman, and Steacy (2014) note a troubling finding from research on decoding interventions: Some children make strong gains in pseudoword decoding without making concomitant improvements in reading real words, a problem that may help explain the difficulties many older poor decoders have in building text reading fluency (Torgesen, 2004).

One way to address this issue might be to focus on teaching an appropriate set of real words in conjunction with teaching phonemic decoding, and doing so in a manner that fosters a generative word-learning process, as suggested by Compton et al. (2014).

...the requirements of literacy shift with schooling..at upper grade levels... students with severe literacy difficulties will usually need continuing intervention and supports...

Another way to address this problem could involve placing a greater emphasis on text reading in intervention, which scientific investigators widely agree is an important aspect of intervention (e.g., Brady, 2011; Foorman et al., 2016; Kilpatrick, 2015), to help increase children's exposure to real words. This last idea might be effective if done early, before poor decoders have accumulated the enormous gap in reading practice characteristic of older poor readers in the upper elementary grades and adolescence (Cunningham & Stanovich, 1998; Torgesen, 2004).

Future studies should help lead to more effective ways to address this issue and others affecting students with the most serious reading difficulties.

Finally, the requirements of literacy shift with schooling. At upper grade levels, the demands for success with complex comprehension and writing tasks, as well as for sheer volume of reading and writing, increase greatly. In order to meet these demands, students with severe literacy difficulties will usually need continuing intervention and supports.

Structured Literacy™ approaches should not be regarded as a quick, easy cure for all children’s literacy problems. Both parents and educators should be skeptical of claims of fast, simple cures for children with serious difficulties in reading and writing. Nevertheless, even for students with severe literacy difficulties, Structured Literacy™ approaches can help provide a much better basis for future literacy progress than do typical literacy practices involving short shrifting of important foundational skills, limited direct instruction from a teacher, and inadequate types of assessment.

Structured Literacy approaches should not be regarded as a quick, easy cure for all children’s literacy problems.

Aren’t Most Teachers Prepared to Deliver Instruction from a Structured Literacy Perspective?

In a word, no. Most teachers are not prepared to deliver instruction that reflects the principles and practices of Structured Literacy™. States vary substantially in their certification requirements and how they ensure teachers’ qualifications for implementing research-based literacy instruction. Unfortunately, teacher licensure exams in many states do not address research-based knowledge about reading or writing, even for specialists (Stotsky, 2009).

Like state certification requirements for teachers of literacy, preservice preparation programs vary greatly in quality, and some programs are strong. Nevertheless, studies indicate that good teacher preparation practices are far from universal—some require one undergraduate course in literacy while others may require four or more courses. In addition, research-based knowledge and competencies are not sufficiently addressed in many teacher preparation programs or in education textbooks (Binks-Cantrell, Washburn, Joshi, & Hougren, 2012; Brady, 2011; Joshi et al., 2009; McCombes-Tolis & Spear-Swerling, 2011; National Council on Teacher Quality, 2006).

Studies have repeatedly shown that licensed teachers, including both general and special educators who have been recently trained, often lack knowledge about phonemic awareness and phonics; the appropriate role of context cues in reading (e.g., to determine word meanings, not to guess at words in decoding); common types of reading difficulties such as dyslexia; effective methods of assessment; and research-based interventions (e.g., Brady et al., 2009; Moats, 1994, 1999; Moats & Foorman, 2003; Spear-Swerling & Cheesman, 2012; Washburn, Joshi, & Binks-Cantrell, 2011).

Program-independent assessment of educators' knowledge and skill, including in relation to Structured Literacy™ practices, is also essential.

On a more positive note, when research-based knowledge and competencies are taught as part of preservice preparation and professional development, teachers are much more likely to develop these skills (Brady et al., 2009; McCutchen, Green, Abbott, & Sanders, 2009; Spear-Swerling & Brucker, 2004).

Of course, providing teacher candidates with strong, research-based preparation is extremely important, but by itself is still no guarantee that all candidates have learned what they need to know and developed the expertise required for effective teaching. Program-independent assessment of educators' knowledge and skill, including in relation to Structured Literacy™ practices, is also essential.

Ensuring That Teachers Are Prepared to Deliver Instruction from a Structured Literacy™ Perspective

Inadequately prepared teachers place students, themselves, *and* school systems at risk of failure. The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) and its subsidiary, the Center for Effective Reading Instruction (CERI) promote initiatives designed to advance standards-based models of educator preparation program accreditation and educator credentialing that ensure educators have adequately mastered the principles and practices of Structured Literacy™.

IDA's Program Review and Accreditation initiative is unique among accrediting models in that it promotes the systematic evaluation and refinement of educator preparation programs using IDA's research-based Knowledge and Practice Standards (KPS) for Teachers of Reading.

These KPS:

- reflect the current state of the scientific research base and are the result of a rigorous development and vetting process that included the input of a wide range of stakeholders, including researchers, educators, higher education faculty, clinical specialists, parents, and advocates.
- are to be used to guide the preparation, certification, and professional development of those individuals who teach reading and related literacy skills in classroom, remedial, and clinical settings. The term *teacher* is used throughout the KPS to refer to any person whose responsibilities include reading instruction. The standards aim to specify what individuals responsible for teaching reading should know and be able to do so that reading difficulties, including dyslexia, may be prevented, alleviated, or remediated.

When an educator preparation program displays the IDA Accredited Program seal and advertises itself as an IDA Accredited Program, the public is assured that graduates have successfully completed a rigorous, program designed to promote candidate mastery of the principles and practices of Structured Literacy™.

For select programs awarded **Accredited Program PLUS** recognition, the public is assured that program graduates have successfully completed intensive supervised practicum experiences that were sufficiently designed and staffed to promote applied mastery of the principles and practices of Structured Literacy™ in the service of preventing reading failure and remediating off-track readers with profiles characteristic of/identifications of dyslexia.

When an educator preparation program displays the IDA Accredited Program seal and advertises itself as an IDA Accredited Program, the public is assured that program completers have successfully completed a rigorous, standards-based preparation program designed to promote candidate mastery of the principles and practices of Structured Literacy™.

IDA does not limit accreditation to institutions of higher education, but extends accreditation to independent educator preparation organizations, clinics, state agencies, and districts themselves.

To learn more about the IDA Program Review and Accreditation initiative, or to find out if a particular educator preparation program holds an active accreditation with IDA, visit the IDA website at www.dyslexiaida.org or email: accreditation@dyslexiaida.org.

IDA does not limit accreditation to institutions of higher education, but extends accreditation to independent educator preparation organizations, clinics, state agencies, and districts themselves.

CERI's educator credentialing initiative brings much needed transparency to the field of specialized credentialing for professionals advertising themselves as Structured Literacy™ educators or dyslexia interventionists, specialists, and therapists.

CERI credentials are differentiated from others available to educators in that they are:

- **STANDARDS-BASED**

Although programs that prepare teachers, clinicians, and specialists to teach reading may differ in their methodologies, teaching approaches, and organizational purposes, they should subscribe to a common set of professional standards for the benefit of the students they serve. The KPS serve as the foundation for all CERI certificates and certifications.

- **INDEPENDENT**

CERI credentials are independent in that they are awarded on the basis of an applicant having demonstrated mastery of key standards-based Structured Literacy™ knowledge and skill indicators, not on the basis of their having completed a particular training or mentoring program affiliated with CERI.

- **INCLUSIVE**

Currently, there is not an empirical basis to identify one particular Structured Literacy™ program or method as more effective than all others, or as more effective for all students with a specific type of difficulty such as poor decoding, specific comprehension difficulties, dyslexia, or language disabilities. As such, CERI certificates and certifications are available to professionals from a wide-range of preparation backgrounds, provided they have met specific Structured Literacy™ knowledge and competency performance thresholds.

...educators who are knowledgeable about the scientific research base on literacy, who routinely update their knowledge, and who keep using that knowledge to improve instruction and intervention, will be in the best position to keep increasing their effectiveness with all students.

- **COMMITTED TO ONGOING EDUCATOR GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Professionals holding a CERI certificate or certification are required to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to professional growth and development by documenting their having completed a minimum of ten (10) hours of KPS-aligned professional development annually in order to renew their certificate or certification.

The need for continuing professional development does not mean that everything currently regarded as best practice will be tossed aside in the future. Rather, educators who are knowledgeable about the scientific research base on literacy, who routinely update their knowledge, and who keep using that knowledge to improve instruction and intervention, will be in the best position to keep increasing their effectiveness with all students.

To learn more about the CERI professional credentialing initiative, or to find a list of educators who hold an active CERI credential, visit the CERI website at www.effectivereading.org or email: info@effectivereading.org.

Advancing Structured Literacy™ for the Benefit of All Students

Reading is taught and/or supported by general educators, content area instructors, support personnel, special educators, related service professionals, remedial reading and remedial language arts specialists, and reading interventionists.

All students, regardless of socio-economic status, should have ready access to teachers of reading who have mastered the principles and practices of Structured Literacy™. Through the choices they make, and the actions they take, parents, educators, advocates, school administrators, higher education faculty members, and policy makers can ensure that equitable access to such educators becomes the norm instead of the exception. For example:

All students, regardless of socio-economic status, should have ready access to teachers of reading who have mastered the principles and practices of Structured Literacy™.

- parents can request that their children work with CERI credentialed professionals or graduates of IDA accredited programs;
- educators can make the decision to pursue a CERICertification;
- advocates can file requests for students' remedial reading needs to be met by a CERI credentialed professional;
- school administrators can prioritize the hiring of graduates from IDA accredited programs or CERI credentialed professionals;
- higher education faculty members can invest in professional development with an IDA accredited program in order to improve their knowledge and skill set or can strive to advance their program for IDA accreditation; and,
- policy makers can incorporate Structured Literacy™ competency requirements into educator preparation legislation and policies.

Interested in Learning More?

If you're interested in learning more about Structured Literacy™ or about IDA's Educator Training Initiatives, please visit: www.dyslexiaida.org or email: info@dyslexiaida.org.

REFERENCES

- Adams, M. J. (1990). *Beginning to read: Thinking and learning about print*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Archer, A., & Hughes, C. (2011). *Explicit instruction: Effective and efficient teaching*. New York: Guilford.
- Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from the NCEE website: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx.
- Berninger, V. W., Abbott, R. D., Jones, J., Gould, L., Anderson-Youngstrom, M., Shimada, S., ... & Apel, K. (2006). Early development of language by hand: Composing, reading, listening, and speaking connections; three letter-writing modes; and fast mapping in spelling. *Developmental Neuropsychology*, 29, 61-92.
- Binks-Cantrell, E., Washburn, E. K., Joshi, R. M., & Hougen, M. (2012). Peter effect in the preparation of reading teachers. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 16, 526-536.
- Birsh, J. R., & Carreker, S. (2019). *Multisensory teaching of basic language skills*, 4th edition. Baltimore MD: Brookes.
- Brady, S. (2011). Efficacy of phonics teaching for reading outcomes: Indications from post-NRP research. In S. Brady, D. Braze, & C. Fowler (Eds.), *Explaining individual differences in reading: Theory and evidence* (pp. 69 – 96). New York: Psychology Press.
- Brady, S., Gillis, M., Smith, T., Lavalette, M., Liss- Bronstein, L., Lowe, E., et al. (2009). First grade teachers' knowledge of phonological awareness and code concepts: Examining gains from an intensive form of professional development. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 22, 425-455.
- Carnine, D. W., Silbert, J., Kame'enui, E., & Tarver, S. (2009). *Direct instruction reading* (5th edition). New York: Pearson.
- Christensen, C. A., & Bowey, J. A. (2005). The efficacy of orthographic rime, grapheme-phoneme correspondence, and implicit phonics approaches to teaching decoding skills. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 9, 327-349.
- Clay, M. M. (1994). *Reading Recovery: A guidebook for teachers in training*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Compton, D. L., Miller, A. C., Elleman, A. M., & Steacy, L. M. (2014). Have we forsaken reading theory in the name of “quick fix” interventions for children with reading disability? *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 18, 55-73.
- Cunningham, A. E., & Stanovich, K. E. (1998). What reading does for the mind. *American Educator*, 22, 8-15.
- Cunningham, A. E., Zibulsky, J., Stanovich, K. E., & Stanovich, P. J. (2009). How teachers would spend their time teaching language arts: The mismatch between self-reported and best practices. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 42, 418-430.
- Fletcher, J. M., Lyon, G. R., Fuchs, L. S., & Barnes, M.A. (2018). *Learning disabilities: From identification to intervention*, 2nd edition. New York: Guilford.

- Foorman, B., Beyler, N., Borradaile, K., Coyne, M., Denton, C. A., Dimino, J., et al. (2016). *Foundational skills to support reading for understanding in kindergarten through 3rd grade* (NCEE 2016-4008). U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.
- Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2009). *The Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Gersten, R., Compton, D., Connor, C.M., Dimino, J., Santoro, L., Linan-Thompson, S., and Tilly, W.D. (2008). *Assisting students struggling with reading: Response to Intervention and multi-tier intervention for reading in the primary grades. A practice guide*. (NCEE 2009-4045). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>.
- Gillingham, A., & Stillman, B. (2014). *The Gillingham manual: Remedial training for children with specific disability in reading, spelling, and penmanship* (8th edition). Cambridge, MA: Educators Publishing Service.
- Graham, S., Bollinger, A., Booth Olson, C., D'Aoust, C., MacArthur, C., McCutchen, D., & Olinghouse, N.(2012). *Teaching elementary school students to be effective writers: A practice guide* (NCEE 2012-4058). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx#pubsearch.
- Graham, S., McArthur, C.A., & Fitzgerald, J. (Eds.). (2007). *Best practices in writing instruction*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- International Dyslexia Association. (2018, March). *Knowledge and practice standards for teachers of reading, 2nd edition*. Retrieved from <https://dyslexiaida.org/knowledge-and-practices/>
- Joshi, R. M., Binks, E., Graham, L., Ocker-Dean, E., Smith, D., & Boulware-Gooden, R. (2009). Do textbooks used in university reading education courses conform to the instructional recommendations of the National Reading Panel? *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 42*, 458-463.
- Kamil, M. L., Borman, G. D., Dole, J., Kral, C. C., Salinger, T., and Torgesen, J. (2008). *Improving adolescent literacy: Effective classroom and intervention practices: A Practice Guide* (NCEE #2008-4027). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc>.
- Kilpatrick, D. A. (2015). *Essentials of assessing, preventing, and overcoming reading difficulties*. Hoboken NJ: Wiley & Sons.
- Lindamood, P. & Lindamood, P. (1998). *The Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing Program for Reading, Spelling, and Speech*, Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.
- Mathes, P. G., Denton, C. A., Fletcher, J. M., Anthony, J. L., Francis, D. J., & Schatschneider, C. (2005). The effects of theoretically different instruction and student characteristics on the skills of struggling readers. *Reading Research Quarterly, 40*, 148-182.
- McCombes-Tolis, J., & Spear-Swerling, L. (2011). The preparation of pre-service elementary educators in understanding and applying the terms, concepts, and practices associated with response to intervention in early reading contexts. *Journal of School Leadership, 21*, 360-389.

- McCutchen, D., Green, L., Abbott, R. D., & Sanders, E. A. (2009). Further evidence for teacher knowledge: Supporting struggling readers in grades three through five. *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 22, 401-423.
- McLeskey, J., Barringer, M-D., Billingsley, B., Brownell, M., Jackson, D., Kennedy, M., Lewis, T., Maheady, L., Rodriguez, J., Scheeler, M. C., Winn, J., & Ziegler, D. (2017, January). *High-leverage practices in special education*. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children & CEEDAR Center.
- Moats, L. C. (1994). The missing foundation in teacher education: Knowledge of the structure of spoken and written language. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 44, 81- 102.
- Moats, L. C. (1999). *Teaching reading IS rocket science: What expert teachers of reading should know and be able to do*. Washington, DC: American Federation of Teachers.
- Moats, L. C. (2017). Can prevailing approaches to reading instruction accomplish the goals of RTI? *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, 43, 15-22.
- Moats, L. C., & Foorman, B. R. (2003). Measuring teachers' content knowledge of language and reading. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 53, 23-45.
- National Council on Teacher Quality. (2006). *What education schools aren't teaching about reading and what elementary teachers aren't learning*. Washington, DC: Author.
- National Reading Panel. (2000). *Teaching children to read: An evidence-based assessment of the scientific research literature on reading and its implications for reading instruction*. Washington, DC: National Institutes of Health.
- National Research Council. (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academies Press.
- Piasta, S. B., Connor, C. M., Fishman, B. J., & Morrison, F. J. (2009). Teachers' knowledge of literacy concepts, classroom practices, and student reading growth. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 13, 224-248.
- Spear-Swerling, L. (2018). Structured literacy and typical literacy practices: Understanding differences to create instructional opportunities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 51, 201-211
- Spear-Swerling, L., & Brucker, P. (2004). Preparing novice teachers to develop basic reading and spelling skills in children. *Annals of Dyslexia*, 54, 332-364.
- Spear-Swerling, L., & Cheesman, E. (2012). Teachers' knowledge base for implementing response-to-intervention models in reading. *Reading & Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 25, 1691-1723.
- Spear-Swerling, L., & Zibulsky, J. (2014). Making time for literacy: Teacher knowledge and time allocation in instructional planning. *Reading & Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 27(8), 1353-1378.
- Stotsky, S. (2009). Licensure tests for special education teachers: How well they assess knowledge of reading instruction and mathematics. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 42, 464-474.
- Torgesen, J. K. (2004). Lessons learned from research on interventions for students who have difficulty learning to read. In P. McCardle & V. Chhabra (Eds.), *The voice of evidence in reading research* (pp. 355-381). Baltimore, MD: Brookes Publishing Co.

- Torgesen, J.K., Alexander, A., Wagner, R.K., Rashotte, C., Voeller, K., & Conway, T. (2001). Intensive remedial instruction for children with severe reading disabilities: Immediate and long-term outcomes from two instructional approaches. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 34*(1), 33–58.
- Vaughn, S., Cirino, P. T., Linan-Thompson, S., Mathes, P. G., Carlson, C. D., Hagan, E. C., . . . Francis, D. J. (2006). Effectiveness of a Spanish intervention and an English intervention for English language learners at risk for reading problems. *American Educational Research Journal, 43*(3), 449-487.
- Vellutino, F. R., Fletcher, J. M., Scanlon, D. M., & Snowling, M. J. (2004). Specific Reading disability (dyslexia): What have we learned in the past four decades? *Journal of Child Psychiatry and Psychology, 45*, 2–40.
- Washburn, E. K., Joshi, R. M., & Binks-Cantrell, E. S. (2011). Teacher knowledge of basic language concepts and dyslexia. *Dyslexia, 17*, 165-183.
- Wilson, B. A. (1988). *Wilson reading system*. Oxford, MA: Wilson Language Training Corporation.

Principal Author

Louise Spear-Swerling, Ph.D.

Contributors

Martha “Marty” Hougen, Ph.D., CEEDAR Center: University of Florida

Timothy Odegard, Ph.D., Middle Tennessee State University

Jule McCombes-Tolis, Ph.D., Fairfield University

IDA Scientific Advisory Board

Co-Chairs:

Fumiko Hoefft, M.D., Ph.D., University of California, San Francisco

Richard K. Wagner, Ph.D., Florida State University

Jason Yeatman, Ph.D., University of Washington

Board Members:

Elsje van Bergen, Ph.D., Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Don Comptom, Ph.D., Florida State University/Florida Center for Reading Research

Laurie E. Cutting, Ph.D., Vanderbilt University

Holly Fitch, Ph.D., University of Connecticut

Elena Grigorenko, Ph.D., University of Houston, Baylor College

Kenneth R. Pugh, Ph.D., Haskins Laboratories, Yale University, University of Connecticut

Sally E. Shaywitz, M.D., Yale University School of Medicine

Julie Washington, Ph.D., Georgia State University

IDA Executive Management Team

Sonja Banks, Chief Executive Officer

David Holste, Chief Financial Officer

Jule McCombes-Tolis, Ph.D., Chief Academic Officer

©2019 International Dyslexia Association

This Educator Training Initiatives Brief is available in PDF form for free download through the International Dyslexia Association’s website.

Media Contact: For all media inquiries, please contact: Ms. Denise Douce, Director of Media/Communications, at ddouce@dyslexiaida.org

Suggested APA Reference

International Dyslexia Association. (2019). *Structured LiteracyTM: An introductory guide*. Baltimore, MD: Author.