

Powering Lifelong Learning for Elementary Students with Dyslexia





Powering Lifelong Learning for Elementary Students with Dyslexia

Today's K-5 literacy initiatives and action plans call for supporting all learners, including those with specific disabilities such as dyslexia, with intensive instruction to develop the knowledge and skills required for effective reading.

As evidence of the growing focus on addressing this category of learners, in 2016, the United States Senate passed Senate Resolution 576, requiring schools and state and local educational agencies to be aware of the educational implications of dyslexia and to address them properly (S.R. 576)⁴.

Many states are making progress in developing guidelines to assist in identifying, assessing, and supporting students with dyslexia. Some states have outlined a set of screening and assessment measures which aim to pinpoint the needs of learners with dyslexia and provide proper instruction to:

- Systematically identify student learning needs through the implementation of evidenced-based instruction and assessment
- Use Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Response to Intervention (RTI) instructional models
- Provide evaluation for dyslexia that includes assessment of letter identification, letter-sound associations, word identification, reading fluency, reading comprehension, spelling, and written expression

What is Dyslexia?

According to the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), dyslexia is a neurobiological learning disability that is characterized by difficulties with word recognition, poor spelling, and minimal decoding abilities (IDA 2018)².

Typically, students with dyslexia have difficulties in these areas due to a deficit in the phonological component of language. Students can also experience problems with reading comprehension and reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge (Lyon et al. 2003)³.

Phonological processing is the most common deficit in students with dyslexia. Phonological processing includes a student's ability to acquire sound-letter correspondences, know syllables, learn new words, communicate clearly in writing, and understand vocabulary and different word meanings (Wagner et al. 2013)⁶.

Effective Approaches for Teaching Students with Dyslexia

Students with dyslexia are present in almost every classroom, so effective instruction is critical. Between 15-20% of the US population exhibits symptoms of dyslexia (IDA 2016)¹. Effective instruction for students with dyslexia should be explicit, direct, cumulative, intensive, and focused on the structure of language. Especially for these students, teachers and educators need to focus on how the curriculum is taught and what content should be taught. In this context, the Structured Literacy approach is highly effective for students with reading disabilities.

Direct Instruction employs a Structured Literacy approach which is explicit and systematic. The Direct Instruction model provides a structured curriculum to support reading and spelling programs that serve learners with dyslexia, in addition to those with other special needs.

Direct Instruction is an evidence-based method of teaching proven to transform all students into confident learners. It is designed with lessons that are explicit, intensive, consistent, and interactive to ensure the best learning experience for all students.

Structured Literacy is systematic, cumulative, and diagnostic. This approach emphasizes the acquisition of accurate and fluent decoding skills with multiple forms of progress monitoring across many different learning paths.

Two Direct Instruction curriculum programs, *SRA Reading Mastery* and *SRA Corrective Reading*, provide essential content that educators should be teaching to students with dyslexia. Both programs teach decoding strategies by incorporating six major elements that work together to provide effective instruction for students with dyslexia:

1. Phonology
2. Sound-Symbol Association
3. Syllables
4. Morphology
5. Syntax
6. Semantics

Reading Mastery and *Corrective Reading* are identified by Dr. Sally Shaywitz (Shaywitz 2005)⁵ as effective research-based programs because they incorporate the features that are essential elements for teaching students with dyslexia. Both programs successfully do the following:

- 1) Address the phonological weakness that blocks decoding and, in turn, interferes with word identification; teach phonemic awareness through segmenting, blending, and rhyming.
- 2) Teach phonics explicitly and systematically in a way that empowers learners to analyze and sound out an unknown word, rather than guess from the pictures or context.
- 3) Afford many opportunities to develop fluency, the ability to read accurately, quickly, and smoothly.
- 4) Progress from sounds to words to stories, all the while supporting students with ample practice.
- 5) Provide the direct instruction and rich reading experiences needed to build vocabulary and to develop reading comprehension strategies.
- 6) Deliver intensive instruction that is more finely calibrated and more explicit than that provided by other programs.

About Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction delivers a learning experience proven to transform students at all ability levels into highly skilled and confident learners—whether they are striving learners, English Learners (EL), learning disabled, or on-level.

Direct Instruction curricula give educators the instructional framework and resources required to meet and even surpass school achievement and improvement objectives.

Skills are introduced gradually, reinforced, and continually assessed, so no student can fall behind. Lessons are scripted and quickly paced. Teachers correct errors immediately and motivate students with positive reinforcement.

Fifty years of independent research shows measurable success in all kinds of classrooms.

To find out more, visit directinstruction.com.

About McGraw-Hill Education

McGraw-Hill Education is a learning science company that delivers personalized learning experiences that help students, parents, educators and professionals drive results. McGraw-Hill Education has offices across North America, India, China, Europe, the Middle East and South America, and makes its learning solutions available in more than 60 languages. Visit us at mheducation.com or find us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn or Twitter.

References and Sources Consulted:

- ¹International Dyslexia Association (IDA) 2016. Effective Reading Instruction. Baltimore, MD: IDA. <https://dyslexiaida.org/> (accessed April 12, 2017).
- ²International Dyslexia Association (IDA). 2018. Multisensory Structured Language Teaching. Baltimore, MD: IDA. <https://dyslexiaida.org/multisensory-structured-language-teaching-fact-sheet/>. (accessed December 13, 2018).
- ³Lyon, G. R., S. E. Shaywitz, and B. A. Shaywitz. 2003. "A Definition of Dyslexia." *Annals of Dyslexia* 53 (1): 1–14.
- ⁴Senate Resolution 576, 114th Congress (2015-2016).
- ⁵Shaywitz, S.E. (2005). *Overcoming dyslexia: A new and complete science-based program for reading problems at any level*. New York: Vintage Books. (2015-2016).
- ⁶Wagner, R. K., J. K. Torgesen, C. A. Rashotte, and N. A. Pearson. 2013. *Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing, 2nd ed. (CTOPP-2)*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.



Because learning changes everything.™

