MOVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION

Partners in the Science of Reading

Virtual Conference | October, 13 2021

THE READING LEAGUE

Keynote Speakers

Kareem Weaver *(opening keynote)*

The Case for Equity: Moving Past Our Belligerent Denial

Literacy, in the Information Age, is the essential gateway to society. Students must have consistent access to direct, explicit reading instruction that systematically develops foundational reading skills for the greatest number of learners. The Science of Reading must not be considered an ideological preference, pedagogical inclination, or inevitable swing of an instructional pendulum. Rather, the research consensus and supporting science must be applied as a matter of equity and civil rights.

A clinical presentation of research has limited impact on any sector because the predictably intractable resistance is only marginally technical, and it flourishes in sanitized debates over ideology that are detached from ethical and sociological implications of the outcomes. America's peculiarly pernicious relationship with equitable access to literacy can only be changed by examining our motives, training, and assumptions.

Jennifer Buckingham *(closing keynote)*

Need to Know or Nice to Know? What is at the Heart of the Science of Reading for Teachers?

The depth, breadth, and volume of articles, books, and presentations on scientific reading research is enormous and growing every day. It can be overwhelming even for researchers, educators, and practitioners who have been immersed in the literature for decades. Interpreting the research and translating it into classroom practice requires specialized knowledge and a lot of time, and the prospect can be daunting and demotivating for busy teachers who are newly aware of the science of reading. But not all of the knowledge gleaned from scientific research is necessary to be a highly effective teacher of reading. In this presentation, Jennifer will address the dilemma of determining what teachers really need to know to get their students reading.

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Session Speakers

Speakers are listed in alphabetical order.

Heidi Beverine-Curry

6-Step Lesson Plan for Phonics & Fluency: An Overview

This session will introduce participants to an evidence-aligned 6-Step Lesson Plan structure that has all the active ingredients for improving students' word reading achievement. No pricey materials or edu-tech needed!

Mitchell Brookins

Teaching Comprehension with a Culturally Responsive Lens

Engagement, relevance, and rigor are critical elements of creating academic success in today's classrooms. Teachers are tasked with how to hone students' literacy skills while also making them critically aware of the world-at-large. In this session, participants will learn the importance of providing explicit comprehension instruction in syntax and text structure and how that deepens students' understanding of grade-level, complex texts. Also, participants will learn the tenets of culturally relevant pedagogy. In this session, the intersection between culturally relevant pedagogy and explicit comprehension instruction will be used as a lens for instructional planning and the creation of learning tasks. It is through this intersection that we will explore how to create literacy experiences that collectively empower and equip our students to navigate and transform an increasingly complex world.

Nancy Duggan

Reading Goals: Combining the Guidance of I.D.E.A.Laws and the Science of Reading for Appropriate and Effective IEP Reading Instruction

We often hear about "data driven" goals and that "needs determine goals." This is true, but the data collected and the "needs" that are assessed should be understood as special education law and the science of reading are implemented together. This workshop for reading specialists, teachers, psychologists, educational evaluators, advocates or other professionals, and of course parents, walks through the intersection of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (I.D.E.A.) reading guidelines and scientifically-based decision making during the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. This workshop aims to improve the way reading goals are written and advance reading goal advocacy for participants.

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Steven Dykstra

How Science Works: Teaching Beyond the Science We Have Without Violating that Science

The science of reading tells us what we must do, and along with common sense tells us what we must not do. But that may not always be enough. When teachers or other practitioners have to venture past the edge of the confirmed science to serve people there are better and worse ways to do it. We will explore the varying definitions that people use when they refer to the "Science of Reading," and why those definitions matter at least some of the time. Then we'll talk about how to walk carefully as you step off the edge of science, because sometimes you're just going to have to.

Blair Payne and Sarah Fishstrom

Explicit Instruction: The Secret Sauce of Implementing the Science of Reading

Explicit instruction was identified as a high-leverage practice in 2017 by the Council for Exceptional Children. Although explicit instruction has been designated the gold standard for delivering special education reading instruction, especially for students with learning difficulties, many teachers struggle with implementing and understanding its components. The goal of this presentation is to break down foundational, research-based principles of explicit instruction so that teachers, administrators, and instructional coaches can feel confident identifying and implementing explicit reading instruction in classrooms. The presenters will utilize practical examples for K-12 students across all five components of reading. The examples will allow educators to secure the understanding of the practice in a way that can be easily transferred to their own classroom.

Selenid M. Gonzalez-Frey

Connected vs. Segmented Phonation – Teaching Beginning Readers to Decode Unfamiliar Words

Learning to decode is an important step in becoming an accurate and automatic reader. In this session you will learn about a decoding method, called connected phonation. This instructional method helps emerging readers, specifically with the act of blending individual sounds in a word together to pronounce the whole word correctly. The connected phonation method teaches students to pronounce phonemes in words without breaking the speech stream before blending. The key findings from a study called Connected Phonation is More Effective than Segmented Phonation for Teaching Beginning Readers to Decode Unfamiliar Words will be presented. This session will highlight some difficulties students experience with decoding words and how connected phonation can help students overcome some of these difficulties. Further, the session will highlight the instructional implications of using words made up continuant consonants to teach decoding before moving into words made of stop consonants.

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Lucy Hart-Paulson

ABC to XYZ: What the Science Says about Alphabet Learning, Assessment, and Instruction

Alphabet knowledge is a vital foundation for literacy learning. A significant body of research describes developmental sequences and age expectations for young children's alphabet learning along with recommendations for teaching the alphabet. In early childhood settings, there are varying beliefs and philosophies for how young children learn the alphabet. As a result, instructional approaches vary widely. What is your perspective on how children acquire alphabet knowledge? What is your instructional approach to teaching the alphabet? Are you satisfied with the learning outcomes? How does that approach match up with the science? This session describes the scientific research on alphabet learning, assessment, and instruction with connections to phonological awareness, rapid automatic naming, and the writing process.

Nancy Hennessy

Comprehension Check-Up: What Every Educator Should Know

Knowledge of the complexity of comprehension is foundational to informed instruction. Explore critical comprehension processes and guidelines for supporting its development.

Pam Kastner, Erin Eighmy, and Tambra Isenberg

Harnessing the Power of Spelling Inventories

This session will highlight the importance of incorporating a spelling inventory to your assessment tool box. The practical application of a spelling inventory will be the main focus of this presentation.

Spelling inventories illuminate students' understanding of language: phonology, orthography, and morphology. We will examine student spelling samples, review the types of errors students make, and showcase a tool that teams can use to drive discussion and target instruction and intervention.

At the conclusion of this session participants will be ready to administer a spelling inventory to accelerate student learning.

April Hackett, Tiffany Kalsi, and Julie McDermid

A Grassroots Movement: How 3 Speech-Language Pathologists are Changing Reading Instruction in Their School Board

Working for the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario, three Speech-Language Pathologists (S-LPs) have spent the last two years working toward revolutionizing reading instruction across their school board. Starting with a passion for early literacy and a deep understanding of the reading brain, these S-LPs delivered hundreds of hours of professional development to educators, focusing on the WHY of reading instruction, before creating evidence-aligned materials for the HOW of the reading brain. Educators first learned about the reading brain, then how to think in sounds, how to use a sound wall, and how to focus on phonemic awareness. To support educators in aligning their teaching practices with the reading brain, the S-LPs created evidence-aligned materials that could be used both for in-person learning and virtual classrooms. Join this session to learn how change can be made from the bottom up.

Jeannette Mancilla-Martinez

The Critical Role of Spoken Language in Reading Outcomes Among Students from Spanish-speaking Homes

English is the predominant language of instruction for most U.S. students, including the large and growing population of students from Spanish-speaking homes. This means that U.S. students typically develop literacy skills only in English through formal schooling. Further, in contrast to students from English-only homes, students from Spanish-speaking homes are formally designated by schools as coming from a non-English language background, highlighting the deficit framing that has been ubiquitous in characterizing this heterogeneous population of learners, centered on English proficiency. In this talk, the importance and implications of assessment selections to equitably evaluating language and reading achievement and development among students from Spanish-speaking homes is considered. While insufficient by itself, acknowledging the complex process of spoken language and reading development represents an initial step toward the provision of appropriate and equitable academic support for the increasingly diverse population of multilingual learners in the U.S.

Katharine Pace Miles

High Frequency Words: Implications for Instruction Based on Word Type and Orthographic Regularity

This presentation will review the theory of orthographic mapping and explain how the theory informed subsequent research on high frequency words. The researcher will review her studies that examined the teaching of high frequency words in isolation vs. in context, prerequisite skills that predicted success with learning these words, orthographic regularity of a list of 419 of these words, and the use of these words on classroom word walls. Other small-scale projects that examined instructional approaches to support the anchoring of these words in memory will be discussed. Additionally, the researcher will clarify the research-to-practice disconnect regarding the term “sight words.” Every effort will be made to distinguish between the researcher and practitioner definition of the term, and the presenter will explain that these are high frequency words that will eventually all be read automatically by sight.

Nicky Parr

Handwriting Matters

Nicky is looking forward to sharing stories that demonstrate the transformative impact handwriting improvement makes on people’s lives. She’ll explain her approach and how research has helped shine a light on why it works. Nicky will also look at the emerging evidence that writing by hand plays a crucial role in reading development.

Christine Quesada

Morpheme Madness

Children first learn how to read from part to whole, putting together individual phonemes in a word. As children progress in their reading, they learn about larger meaningful units in words called morphemes. In this session, participants will learn why morphology is an important part of reading instruction and how it applies to Scarborough’s Rope Model. This session will also review the different types of morphemes and show how teachers can apply this knowledge for effective instruction. Participants will be introduced to additional resources for morphology instruction and guided practice, including the new Reading League morpheme boards for virtual and in-person learning. These interactive morpheme boards will provide students with practice constructing words.

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Kathleen Rastle

The Dramatic Impact of Explicit Instruction on Learning to Read

There is a profound and long-standing debate over the role of explicit instruction in reading acquisition. Explicit instruction is seen as a necessary component of learning to read within the science of reading. However, the notion that children can 'discover' how to read through print experience remains widespread in classrooms and in the popular media. I will begin this talk by discussing why discovery learning approaches are unlikely to be successful in providing children with foundational reading skills. Then, I will present new data demonstrating (a) that most learners fail to discover regular patterns in a writing system even after hours of print experience; and (b) that explicit instruction brings virtually all learners to a high standard. I will finish the talk by discussing why explicit instruction is so powerful and posing some remaining questions for future research.

Rebecca Resnik

Rewiring for Reading: What Could Possibly Go Wrong?

It is common knowledge that instruction "rewires" the brain, but there has long been a disconnect between neuroscience research and professional practice. Most professionals are curious about how their work changes the brain, and want to understand the logic behind "best practice." Dr. Rebecca Resnik will break down how instruction triggers the brain to construct the "information superhighways" that are critical for literacy. Dr. Resnik shares exciting discoveries from the neuroscience of reading. She ties these discoveries to key take-away concepts that professionals can use to guide instructional decision making and recognize signs of reading disability. The presentation will cover what's happening in the brain during typical reading development versus what glitches create learning difficulties. The goal of this presentation is to empower practitioners to become changemakers –armed with knowledge about why things work (or don't!).

Joan Sedita

Adolescent Students with Reading Disabilities: Best Practices Based on the Science of Reading

Why do students in grades 5-12 struggle with reading and writing, and how can we support them? This workshop will begin by summarizing two major causes of literacy difficulty (e.g., learning disabilities including dyslexia, executive functions) and present a model for literacy assessment at the upper grades. Suggestions will then be provided for matching students' needs to intervention instruction, keeping in mind that a "one-size-fits-all" approach does not work. Interventions may need to focus on decoding, comprehension, or both areas. The session will end with an overview of instructional suggestions for content literacy instruction that should be provided by all content teachers in the areas of vocabulary, comprehension, and writing.

Stephanie Stollar

The Use of Curriculum Based Measurement of Reading in MTSS

When a technology has been around for nearly fifty years, it can be easy to forget its value. That may be the case with Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM). CBM measures are brief, standardized, reliable and valid indicators of foundational reading skills designed for formative measurement within the collaborative problem-solving model. As such, CBM measures provide the basis for accomplishing the purposes of assessment needed to implement Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). This session will provide a brief history and description of CBM, articulate the role of CBM in implementing a MTSS model of service delivery, and provide case examples of the use of CBM data in the problem-solving model to address system-level and student-level issues.

Panel Discussion




Nicole Chick, Jessica B. Graves, Alison Pankowski, and Liz Pettit

This year's conference theme *Moving in the Same Direction: Partners in the Science of Reading,* recognizes the urgency and necessity for collaboration and shared experiences in an effort to make any systemic and transformational changes. We know how our stories and experiences can be impactful to others who are working through their own transformations. Therefore, we will host a live, authentic conversation with practitioners to glean insight on questions such as:

- What instructional approaches are you using now in comparison to what you may have done in the past?
- How are you getting colleagues on board with the transformation?
- What roadblocks, if any, do you face and how are you working through them?