

Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties

A professional learning series presented by David Kilpatrick, Ph.D.

Module 4 Session 7

Sponsored by the Exceptional Student Services Unit (ESSU) and created in collaboration with Specific Learning Disability Specialists Jill Marshall and Veronica Fiedler



COLORADO
Department of Education

Module 4: Word-Level Reading

Session 7: Understanding Word Reading Difficulties

Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties

Objective:

Through engagement in this series of 13 on-demand webinars, participants will understand the current research, implications, and the essential elements necessary for assessing, preventing, and overcoming reading difficulties.



ASSESS



PREVENT



OVERCOME

Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties

Webinar Series Modules

Module 1: Reading Research and the Research to Practice Gap

Module 2: Current Approaches to Reading Instruction: Why Many Learners Still Struggle

Module 3: The Simple View of Reading

MODULE 4: WORD-LEVEL READING

Module 5: Reading Comprehension

Module 6: Introduction to Reading Assessment; Assessing Phonological Skills

Module 7: Assessing Phonics Skills

Module 8: Assessing Word Identification and Reading Fluency

Module 9: Assessing Reading Comprehension and Related Skills

Module 10: Effective Approaches for Preventing Reading Difficulties

Module 11: Effective Interventions for Reading Difficulties

Module 12: Case Examples of Reading Disabilities

Module 13: Specific Learning Disability Identification

Module 4 Overview

Module 4:

Word-Level Reading

- 4.1 The Challenges of Word-Level Reading
- 4.2 Word Reading Development
- 4.3 How Poor Phonological Skills Hinder Word Reading
- 4.4 Orthographic Mapping
- 4.5 Fluency
- 4.6 English Learners and Written Word Learning
- 4.7 Understanding Word-Reading Difficulties**

Learning Intentions



Module 4 Session 7: Understanding Word-Reading Difficulties

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Describe why some children struggle in reading
- ✓ Explain why some students have a limited sight vocabulary
- ✓ Understand and explain why some approaches to reading work better than others

Questions About Word Reading Difficulties

- Why do some student have difficulties with word-level reading while others do not?
- Why do some students struggle in learning phonics?
- Why do struggling readers have such limited sight vocabularies?
- Why do some students struggle with reading fluency?
- How does this all affect students learning English?
- Why do some word-reading interventions have such limited results while others have large results?

Why Some Students Have Word-Reading Difficulties

- Assuming adequate effort, opportunity, vision, and hearing, word-level reading difficulties are largely based on the phonological-core deficit
- Alphabetic writing systems like English are based upon the phonology of spoken language
- Written letters do not convey words (except *a*, *I*, and *O!*), but rather convey phonemes within words
- Alphabetic writing systems represent the oral speech stream captured and coded via letters representing phonemes in that speech stream
- *Thus, difficulty with phonemes means difficulty with reading!*

Why Some Students Struggle with Phonics

- Phonics requires:
 - 1) Well-established connections between letters and sounds
 - Letter sounds are abstractions, not found in spoken language
 - 2) Phonological blending, which is the ability to blend abstract phonemes to activate a spoken word
- Both of these require phonological/phonemic skills; children with the phonological-core deficit typically lack these skills
- *Thus, phonics is difficult for students who do not have sufficient phonological skills to be successful with phonics*
 - Simply teaching them phonics does not automatically develop the necessary phonological skill in many such students

Why Some Students Have Limited Sight Vocabulary

- Memory for familiar, instantly accessible words is *not* based upon visual memory; rather it is based on *orthographic memory*
- Orthographic memory requires proficient letter-sound skills and proficient phonemic skills
- These proficient skills allows the phonemes in spoken pronunciations to be mapped onto the letters in printed words
- *Thus, students who lack letter-sound proficiency or phonemic proficiency, or both, cannot efficiently add words to their orthographic lexicons (i.e., sight vocabularies)*

Why Some Students Have Poor Fluency

- The older assumption that fluency is based upon speed of retrieval of known words is not consistent with current research
 - A potential exception are some student with poor rapid automatized naming
- A more well-established assumption is that reading fluency is a byproduct of the size of the students orthographic lexicon/sight vocabulary
- *Thus, students with limited sight vocabularies are going to move through text slowly, relying heavily on (typically poor) phonic decoding and contextual guessing, and therefore lack reading fluency*

Impact on English Learners

- English learners have several obstacles to school success
- The skills needed for reading one alphabetic language typically transfer to reading English
- Word reading can progress reasonably well with proper instruction
 - The bigger obstacle for the reading skills of English Learners has to do with comprehension, due to issues of higher-level language development
- *Thus, for word-level reading, the type of instruction we would use successfully with native English speakers also works well with students who are English Learners*
 - Certainly adjustments must be made to accommodate individuals and specific native languages (i.e., the familiarity with particular phonemes)

Why Some Interventions Work Better Than Others

- Reading practice has little benefit for students who cannot remember the words they read, yet is essential for those who can
- In Module 11, it will become clear that many of the most common instructional and intervention approaches do not work well with struggling readers
- *Instruction and intervention that is consistent with research on how word reading develops and how children remember words (described in this module) display highly effective outcomes, while instruction and intervention inconsistent with this research displays limited outcomes*

Summary: Module 4 Session 7

- ✓ Word-level reading skills are based upon phonological/phonemic skills
- ✓ Poor access to phonemes in spoken words negatively affects reading development
- ✓ Such difficulties affects phonic development, sight word acquisition, and fluency
- ✓ ELs generally respond well to high-quality word-level reading instruction
- ✓ Intervention and instruction that is consistent with a scientific understanding of reading has far greater outcomes than intervention and instruction that is inconsistent with research



Reflect and Connect:

How has your understanding of various aspects of word reading development changed as a result of this module? How might your thoughts on reading instruction change?

Wrap Up

What was your biggest takeaway?

What questions do you still have?



Up Next

Module 5.1 **The Simple View of Reading and** **Reading Comprehension**



Thank you!



Please visit the CDE Specific Learning Disability Website for more information:

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/SD-SLD>