

# Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties

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

## Module 6 Session 1

*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 6: Introduction to Reading Assessment; Assessment of Phonological Skills**

*Session 1: Introduction to Intervention-Oriented Assessment*



## **Vision**

All students in Colorado will become educated and productive citizens capable of succeeding in society, the workforce, and life.

## **Mission**

The mission of the CDE is to ensure that all students are prepared for success in society, work, and life by providing excellent leadership, service, and support to schools, districts, and communities across the state.

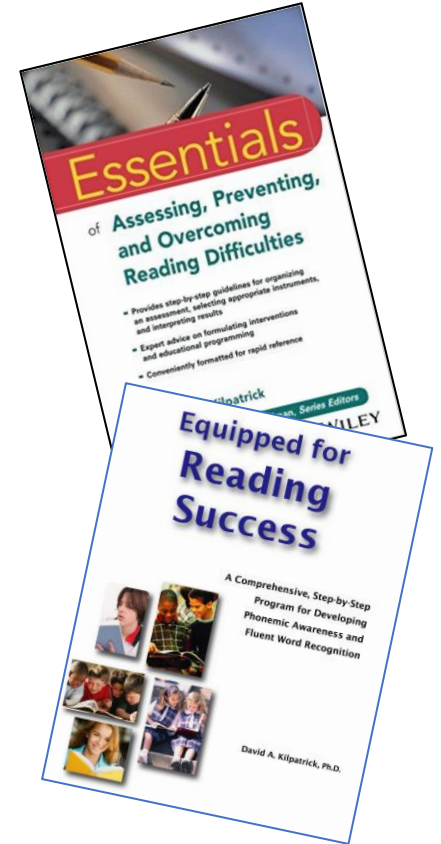
**Every student,  
every step of the way**

# Reference and Disclaimer

- This on-demand webinar series, *Assessing, Preventing and Overcoming Reading Difficulties*, was developed by David Kilpatrick, Ph.D, in collaboration with the Specific Learning Disability Specialists in the Exceptional Student Services Unit of the Colorado Department of Education.
- Content of the webinar series was originally included in the book *Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties* (Wiley, 2015).
- This material was developed under a grant from the Colorado Department of Education. **The content does not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.**



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# Series Designed for Use in Multiple Ways

- 1. Complete all 13 modules:** Participants who engage in all thirteen modules will be provided a comprehensive learning experience encompassing research, impact, and critical elements of assessing, preventing, and overcoming reading difficulties.
- 2. Complete individual modules:** Participants may view a session/s for specific information and guidance on topics related to assessing, preventing and overcoming reading difficulties. This format is ideal for short professional development opportunities, e.g., during an Impact Team meeting or Professional Learning Community.
- 3. Complete as a book or chapter study:** Participants may view all or part of the series as a tandem companion or supplemental resource for supporting a study of the book: *The Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties* (Wiley, 2015)

# 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 6 Overview

## **Module 6: Introduction to Reading Assessment; Assessing Phonological Skills**

### **6.1 Introduction to Intervention Oriented Assessment**

### 6.2 Issues in Assessing Phonological Skills

### 6.3 Phonological Awareness and Blending Assessment

# Learning Intentions



## Module 6 Session 1: Introduction to Intervention-Oriented Assessment

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Define and describe Intervention-Oriented Assessment
- ✓ Indicate ways it differs from conventional assessment
- ✓ Identify the benefits of Intervention-Oriented Assessment for teachers and students

# Problems with Traditional Assessments

- Traditional psychoeducational assessment has focused on determining the presence or absence of an educational disability
- Many discussions have existed over the years about assessing a student's "strengths and weaknesses"
  - These discussions have not been informed by the research on the development of reading, writing, and math skills
  - They have typically been derived from looking for "scatter" in cognitive profiles
  - When strengths and weaknesses focused on academics (e.g., good at phonics, poor at sight word memory), these efforts have not reflected the research into those academic skills but rely on conventional assumptions

# Problems with Current Assessments

- The traditional strengths and weakness approach is still with us
  - No major advances in incorporating the research on reading
  - This approach works backward from cognitive assessment research
- Common in recent years are interventions based on learning theory
  - Their assessments rarely include tests of WM, RAN, or vocabulary
  - They contain inadequate assessments of phonemic awareness; some of them have limited assessments of letter-sound proficiency
    - Their timed nonsense words are restricted to CVC words
  - These approaches work backward from learning theory
- Thus, they often do not provide sufficient information about why a student struggles in reading
  - Their assumption that it does matter is not consistent with the research
  - Learning theory based interventions have modest results in reading

# Intervention Oriented Assessment

- This is my name for the idea of working backward from the research on reading, writing and math (our focus is, of course, on reading)
- The focus is on determining WHY a student struggles in reading
- The goal is to suggest more informed instruction directly related to the actual intervention research on reading
  - Rather than inferred from learning theory or the cognitive assessment literature
- Determining an SLD in reading is not the goal or focus of Intervention Oriented Assessment
  - However, the data gathered in such an evaluation could be used to diagnose and SLD when appropriate
- Often less time consuming than traditional comprehensive evaluations

# The Challenge of Intervention Oriented Assessment

- Test batteries are not based upon this approach
- Evaluation teams must draw subtests from existing batteries
  - Individual subtests must be interpreted, which has technical problems
    - Reliability of subtest scores vs. composite or global scores
  - Solution is to use subtests of the same skill across batteries
- The problem with composites
  - E.g., CTOPP-2 Phonological Awareness Composite or WJ-IV Broad Reading
- The problem of interpreting “average”
  - 100+ year old statistical definitions of “average” are not useful in many cases
  - Average should be based on actual performance (called “base rate”)
    - Illustration from optometry and who gets glasses

# Summary: Module 6 Session 1

- ✓ Intervention-Oriented Assessment consists of an evaluation designed to determine WHY a student struggles
- ✓ The goal is to intelligently inform intervention decisions
- ✓ It differs from conventional assessments in that it
  - ✓ 1) works backward from research on reading development and difficulties and
  - ✓ 2) does not focus on determining an SLD
- ✓ The benefits of Intervention-Oriented Assessment it is
  - ✓ 1) often less time consuming than traditional assessment and
  - ✓ 2) it can provide direct guidance on designing interventions



A woman with dark hair, wearing a white tank top, is shown from the chest up, looking upwards and to the right with a thoughtful expression. Her hand is resting on her chin. The background is a dark chalkboard covered with numerous white question marks drawn in chalk. A large, dark blue thought bubble is positioned on the left side of the image, containing white text.

## **Reflect and Connect:**

What might you need to consider to adjust your assessment practices to become “intervention oriented”?



# Wrap Up



**What was your biggest takeaway?**

**What questions do you still have?**

# Up Next

## **Module 6.2** **Issues in Assessing Phonological** **Skills**





*Thank You*

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

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