Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties

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

Module 6 *Session 2*

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; Assessing Phonological Skills

Session 2: Issues in Assessing Phonological Skills

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 2:
Issues in Assessing Phonological Skills**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Identify some of the challenges to assessing phonological skills

- ✓ Describe the importance of assessing working memory and rapid automatized naming

- ✓ Indicate why phonemic manipulation tasks are more useful than other phonemic awareness tasks

- ✓ Identify what constitutes "average" performance

Which Phonological Skills Should be Tested?

- The phonological-core deficit has a few possible features; struggling word readers may display one or more of them, usually more than one:

  - Poor Phonemic Awareness

  - Poor Phonemic Blending

  - Poor Rapid Automatized Naming

  - Poor Phonological Working Memory

  - Poor Letter-Sound Skills/Nonsense Word Reading

- These are the skills that should be assessed in evaluations of students who are poor word-level readers

  - The first four are covered in this module, the last is covered in Module 7

Issues with Assessing Phonology

- To address the issue of subtest reliability, use multiple tests of the same skill

- Recognize that a subtest scaled score of 7 or 8 (= 85 to 90 standard score; 16th to 25th percentiles) should not be treated as "average"
  - Consider 9 borderline (95 standard score; 37th percentile)

- It is important to distinguish phoneme analysis from synthesis (blending)

- Based upon how orthographic learning occurs (see Module 4), the role of phonemic awareness and blending should be clear

- Why evaluate phonological working memory (WM) and rapid automatized naming (RAN)?

Why Evaluate RAN and WM?

- They take very little time to evaluate and yield important information
- They are good predictors of later reading skills
- They are good predictors of who will be "treatment resistors"
- They can help explain WHY a student may struggle
- They may change the equation when interpreting other reading-related scores
  - Phonemic awareness and nonsense word reading
- They can help with determining instructional strategies
  - Students with or without WM issues may benefit differently
- They can help with more validly diagnosing SLD in reading

Phonemic Manipulation as "State of the Art"

- Many types of phonological awareness tests

  - Phonological can be multiple levels, phonemic being the highest

- We should not get hung up on TASKS

  - Tasks do not influence readng, the underlying skill does

- The only phonemic skills needed are segmentation and blending

  - But segmentation tasks cannot determine proficiency, manipulation tasks can

- Manipulation tasks correlate higher with reading than other tasks

- Manipulation tasks have best data for reading intervention

  - Thus, phonemic manipulation is superior for assessment and intervention

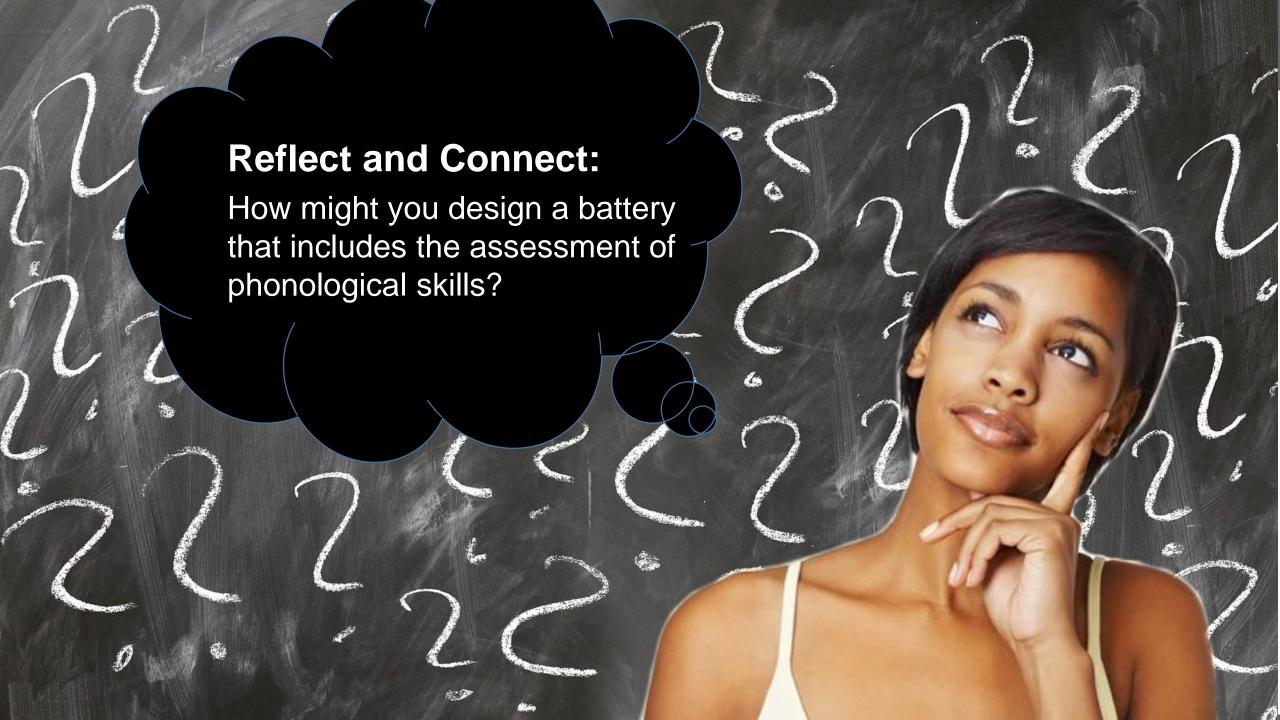- Plus theoretically it is consistent with orthographic learning

Summary: Module 6 Session 2

✓ Identify some of the challenges to assessing phonological skills

✓ There are several advantages to assessing working memory and rapid automatized naming

✓ Phonemic manipulation tasks are best practice because they correlate more strongly with reading, can assess phonemic proficiency, and were used in the most successful reading intervention studies

✓ Average performances need to be adjusted to refer to the top two thirds of students (based on national norms)
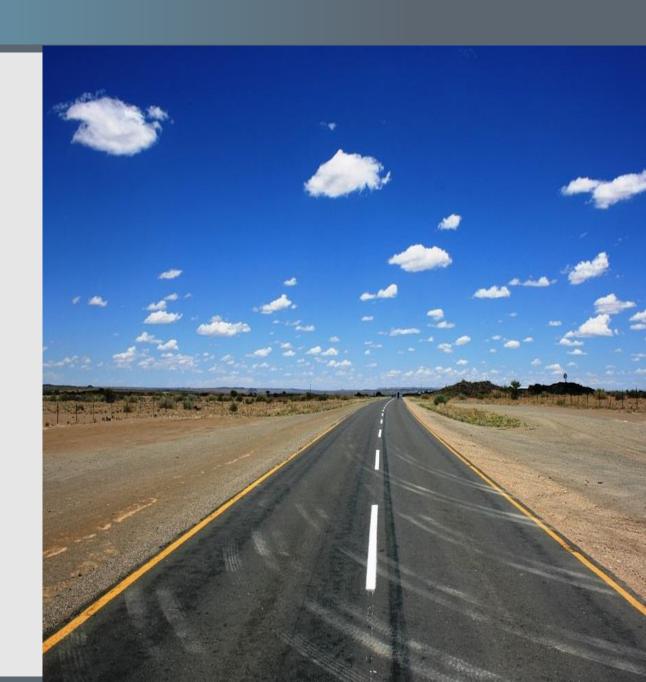
Reflect and Connect:

How might you design a battery that includes the assessment of phonological skills?

Wrap Up

What was your biggest takeaway?

What questions do you still have?

Up Next

Module 6.3
Phonological Awareness and Blending Assessment

Thank You

Colorado Department of Education

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

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