

# Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties

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

## Module 8 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 8: Assessing Word Identification and Reading Fluency**

### *Session 2: Assessing Reading Fluency*

# 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

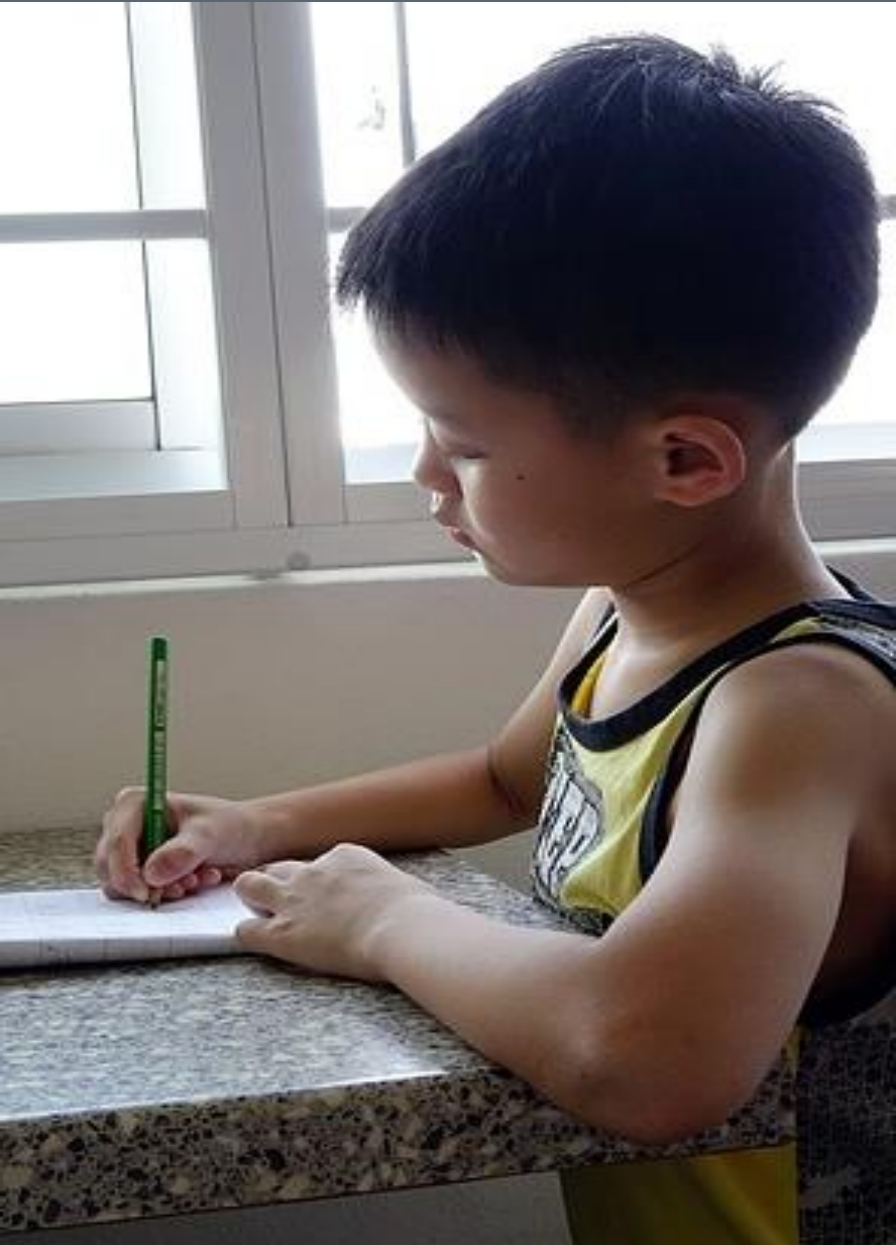
# Module 8 Overview

## **Module 8: Assessing Word Identification and Reading Fluency**

8.1: Assessing Word Identification and Word Recognition

**8.2: Assessing Reading Fluency**

# Learning Intentions



## Module 8 Session 2: Assessing Reading Fluency

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ Distinguish among different types of reading fluency assessments
- ✓ Interpret word reading fluency tasks relative to a student's broader reading assessment profile

# Reading Fluency

- Reading fluency correlates with reading comprehension
- Reading fluency is best understood as a by-product of the size of one's orthographic lexicon (i.e., sight vocabulary)
  - Also affected by other factors such as rapid automatized naming and reading experience
- Reading fluency in grade-level material requires the coordination of multiple lower-level processes
- Thus, reading fluency is a useful barometer of reading skill

# Reading Fluency: Words, Sentences, Paragraphs

- Reading fluency is tested by researchers in multiple ways
- One way is word reading fluency in timed lists (e.g., TOWRE-2)
  - Such tests correlate very strongly with sentence and paragraph reading fluency
- The focus in this session is on sentence–level and paragraph–level reading fluency
- Universal screeners and progress monitoring tools often evaluate paragraph reading



# Reading Fluency on Individualized Achievement Batteries

- Sentence–level fluency subtests (e.g., WJ-ACH-IV; KTEA-3)
  - Concerns about validity with older readers – sentences do not get much more difficult as test progresses
  - Sensitivity vs. specificity – can indicate reading problems but cannot rule out reading problems
- Paragraph/passage–level fluency tests (e.g., GORT-5; WRMT-III)
  - Passages involve increasing difficulty
  - More influenced by comprehension
- Word-level, sentence-level, and paragraph-level fluency tasks all correlate with one another
  - Based upon group data, but individual performance variations occur

# Interpreting Reading Fluency Performance

- Fluency is one of three areas of reading disability
- It is the primary symptom of dyslexia in consistent written languages like Spanish or Italian
- It may be the only symptom of a reading problem
- Poor fluency in spite of good word-reading and reading comprehension should be acknowledged and addressed
- Rapid automatized naming skills should be considered
- Illusory fluency in those with strong language skills
  - With a limited orthographic lexicon, much effort is required to sound fluent
  - Reading comprehension is lower than language comprehension

# Summary: Module 8 Session 2

- ✓ Reading fluency can be assessed at multiple levels: word, sentence, and paragraph; all of these are highly inter-correlated
- ✓ Reading fluency may be the only indication of a struggle in reading (it is typically the only indicator in consistent written languages like Spanish or Italian)
- ✓ Differing fluency subtests may be more useful at differing grade levels (e.g., early elementary vs. late elementary vs. secondary)





## **Reflect and Connect:**

What type of reading fluency tests have you used. How have you interpreted them?



# Wrap Up

What was your biggest takeaway?

What questions do you still have?



# Up Next

## **Module 9.1**

### **Reading Comprehension Tests**







Thank  
You

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

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