Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties

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

Module 9 *Session 1*

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

CDE | COLORADO
Department of Education

Module 9: Assessing Reading Comprehension and Related Skills

Session 1: Reading Comprehension Tests

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.**

The Presenter

DAVID A. KILPATRICK, PHD is Associate Professor of Psychology for the State University of New York, College at Cortland. He teaches courses in learning disabilities and educational psychology. He is also a New York State Certified School Psychologist and has conducted over a thousand evaluations of students with reading difficulties during his 27 years with the East Syracuse-Minoa Central School District. David is currently involved in a number of research and writing projects. He facilitates professional development workshops for educators and presents regularly in districts, and at state and national conferences. He is the author of *Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties* (Wiley, 2015), and *Equipped for Reading Success-A Comprehensive Step-by-Step Program from Developing Phonemic Awareness and Fluent Word Recognition*.
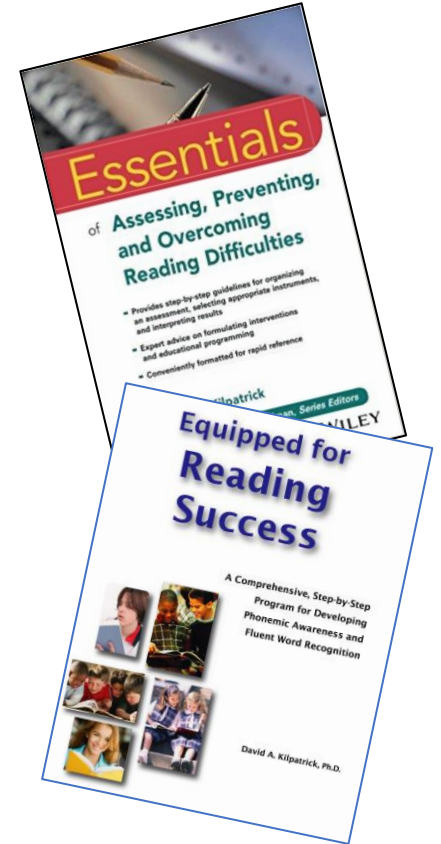
Series Designed for Use in Multiple Ways

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 or 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 9 Overview

Module 9: Assessing Reading Comprehension and Related Skills

9.1 Reading Comprehension Tests

9.2 Language Comprehension and Related Tests

Learning Intentions

**Module 9 Session 1:
Reading Comprehension Tests**

Participants will be able to:

- ✓ **Identify the different ways that reading comprehension can be evaluated based upon the nature of the tests**

- ✓ **Interpret reading comprehension tests in the context of a student's overall reading skill profile**

The Simple View and Reading Comprehension

- The *Simple View of Reading* indicates that reading comprehension is the product of
  - 1) word-level reading skills *and*
  - 2) language comprehension skills
- In this module, reading comprehension will be addressed in two ways:
  - Direct attempts to assess reading via reading comprehension tests and subtests (this session)
  - Attempts to assess the underlying language-related skills needed for successful reading comprehension (next session)

Review of the Types of Reading Difficulties

- There are three different types of reading difficulties that have been established in the reading research literature
  - **Dyslexia** - Poor word-level reading but adequate or better oral language comprehension
  - **Hyperlexia** – Skilled word-level reading but poor oral language comprehension
  - **Combined/Mixed** - Poor word-level reading and poor oral language comprehension
- The reading comprehension tests in this module pertain to the *hyperlexic* and *combined* types of reading difficulty as well as English Learners

Differing Ways to Assess Reading Comprehension

- Reading comprehension has been assessed in multiple ways
  - Silent or oral reading followed by an examiner's verbal questions
  - Silent or oral reading followed by student-read multiple-choice questions
  - Silent or oral reading followed by a pointing response
  - Silent or oral reading followed by student acting out instructions
  - Close procedure
  - Timed sentence reading with yes/no comprehension questions
  - Story retell
- The reading for any given test or subtest may involve single sentences or lengthy passages; narrative or expository text

Not All Reading Comprehension Tests are Created Equal

- Word-level reading tests and subtests inter-correlate very highly
  - They may range from $r = .78$ to $r = .92$

- Reading comprehension tests and subtests have much more modest inter-correlations
  - They may range from $r = .30$ to $r = .70$

- This means that our testing-based impressions of a student's reading comprehension abilities may sometimes be task specific

Reasons for Differing Outcomes Among Tests

- Outcomes between tests may be due to response format
  - For example, verbal output by student vs. pointing or marking yes/no
- Researchers have also identified length of passage as an important factor affecting outcome
  - Tests with brief passages or single sentences correlate more strongly with the *word-reading* side of the Simple View equation
  - Tests with lengthier passages correlate more strongly with the *language comprehension* side of the Simple View equation
- In briefer passages, gaining meaning will more likely hinge on a single word. Lengthier passages provide the reader with more context to figure out what is going on

Interpreting Reading Comprehension Test Performance

- We much acknowledge the differing outcomes that can occur based upon test formats and differing passage length
  - Word-reading skills and language comprehension skills each interact differently with different test formats and passage lengths
- Ideally, use more than one format to assess comprehension
- Examine language skills and word-reading skills independently of the reading comprehension subtests
  - For example, a student with strong language skills may do much better with longer passages than a single sentence based approach
  - Reading comprehension tests can only be properly interpreted if a student's word-level reading skills and language skills are known

Best Practices Can Become Time Consuming

- To address the problem of test-specific outcomes, more than one type of reading comprehension test should be given

- To address the problem of subtest reliability, ideally two subtests of each type would provide for more confident conclusions

- Unlike word-level reading tests, reading comprehension subtests can be time consuming

- Regardless of format or passage length of test items, reading comprehension subtest results must be interpreted in the context of assessments of a student's language comprehension skills and word-level reading skills

Summary: Module 9 Session 1

✓ Reading comprehension tests vary by format and length of individual test items

✓ Format and passage length affect outcomes and are also affected differently by word-reading skills and oral language comprehension skills

✓ Best practices involve the use of multiple reading comprehension test formats and interpreting results in light of a student's word-reading skills and oral language comprehension
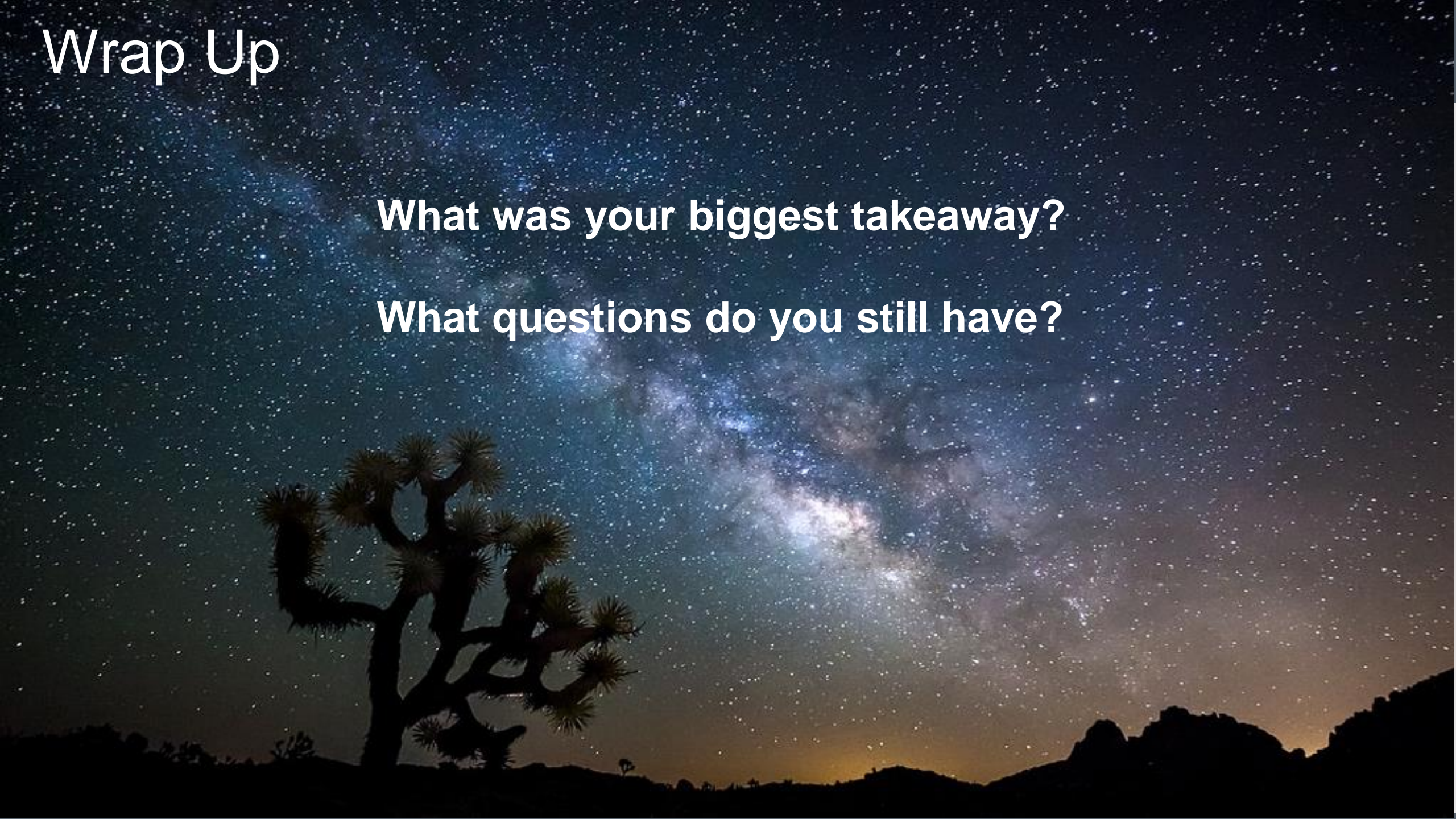
Reflect and Connect:
What reading comprehension subtests do you use? How might you use or interpret them differently?

Wrap Up

What was your biggest takeaway?

What questions do you still have?

Up Next

Module 9.2
Language Comprehension and Related Tests

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