

*A Colorado professional learning series  
based on the book*

# Equipped for Reading Success

**by David Kilpatrick, Ph.D.**

Presented by Deb Hoesterey, Educational Consultant

*Developed in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Education*



**COLORADO**  
Department of Education

**Welcome back. We will continue our study of Dr. Kilpatrick's work.**



# Module Sixteen

Chapter 14:

Learning Disabilities, Dyslexia

(D+L)



## Goals for Module 16

- Learn how ideas, strategies and materials in Equipped for Reading Success relate to students with reading difficulties
- Clarify the meaning of the term *dyslexia*
- Understand the reason for reversals and transpositions
- Review the mental and academic skills that contribute to word recognition and identification
- Learn some of the ways the Equipped for Reading Success program can support RTI and MTSS

### Let's introduce the learning goals for Module 16. They include:

Learn how ideas, strategies and materials in Equipped for Reading Success relate to students with reading difficulties

Clarify the meaning of the term *dyslexia*.

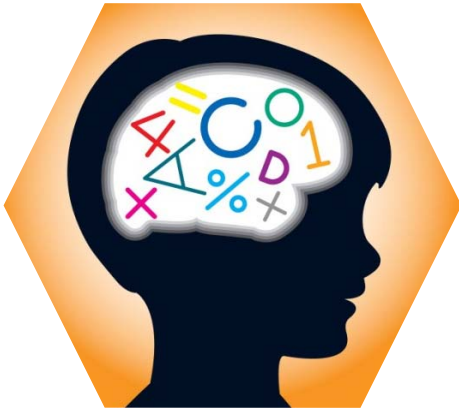
Understand the reason for reversals and transpositions

Review the mental and academic skills that contribute to word recognition and identification.

Learn some of the ways the Equipped for Reading Success program can support RTI and MTSS.



# Understanding the Nature of Dyslexia



Chapter 14 pg. 117

- Reading skills fall along a continuum.
- Highly skilled readers fall on one end, with poor readers on the other end, and everyone else in between.
- Until recently, *dyslexia* has been a medical, physiological and neuropsychological term, not an educational one, until 2015.
- The word *dyslexia* comes from the Greek *dys* (bad) and *lexia* (speech), referring to a written form of speech, namely reading.
- The federal special education law refers to *dyslexia* as “A learning disability in basic reading and/or reading fluency.” Some researchers include that individuals generally have normal verbal language skills.

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We have given dyslexia and reading disabilities a mystique. There is a popular notion that somehow dyslexia involves reversing letters and seeing things backwards, which is a misunderstanding at best.

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## Broad Definitions

Many states have passed dyslexia legislation, and often the definition of dyslexia varies from state to state.

Two commonly used broad definitions of dyslexia are:

1. Webster's II New College Dictionary defines *dyslexia* as simply "*an impairment of the ability to read.*" There is no agreement on how severe the word reading difficulty must be.
2. The second definition is a *popular, but incorrect* definition that refers to an unusual type of reading disorder in which the reader reverses and transposes letters. It is presumed dyslexics "*see things backwards*" or have a type of visual-perceptual problem. Neither is necessarily true.



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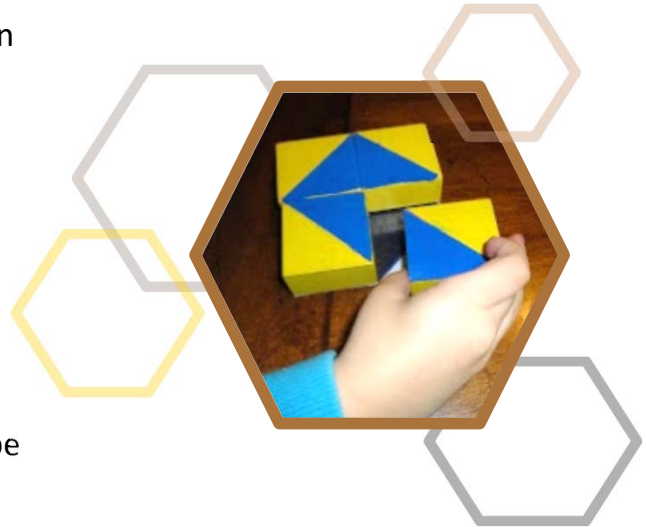
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1. XWebster's II New College Dictionary defines *dyslexia* as simply "*an impairment of the ability to read.*" There is no agreement on how severe the word reading difficulty has to be however. By this definition, , anyone who is a poor word-level reader would be considered dyslexic.
2. XThe second definition is a *popular, but incorrect* definition that refers to an unusual type of reading disorder in which the reader reverses and transposes letters. It is presumed dyslexics "*see things backwards*" or have a type of visual-perceptual problem. Neither is necessarily true. **Dyslexia is not a special type of reading disability, but a reading disability, nonetheless.**



## Visual-Spatial Problems?

- There is extensive evidence **against** the notion that reading difficulties are caused by visual-spatial problems. See Chapter 4 of the *Equipped* manual.
- Dyslexics do not see things backwards or mix things up in their visual world anymore than those without dyslexia.
- Many children with dyslexia can easily track a flying baseball and intercept it while running full speed. Some children with dyslexia may be outstanding at building with Legos or art.



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**What then, is the source of the reversals or transpositions?**

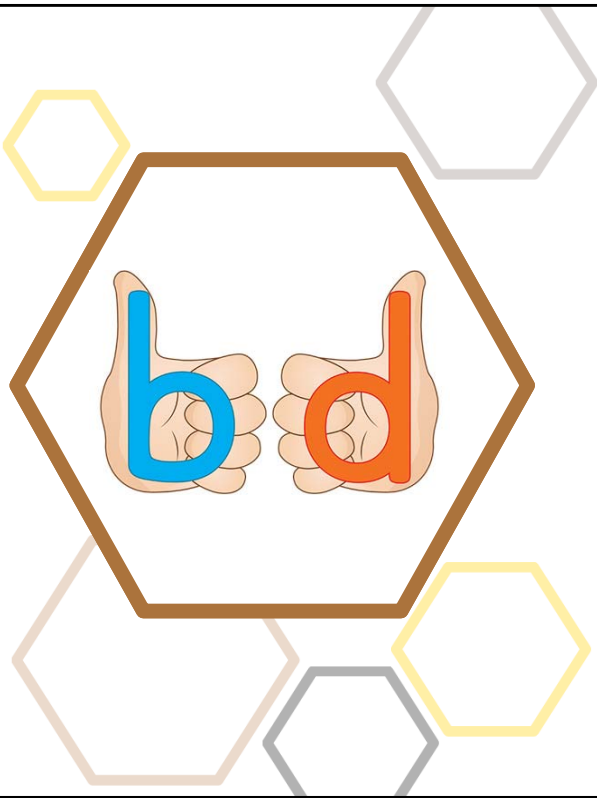
## Reversals and Transpositions

Some students reverse or transpose letters.

**Reversal** – is a letter is written backwards or misread as the backward version of that letter. e.g. A student may read *bib* as *did*.

**Transposition** – is the act of reading or spelling words with the letter order transposed. e.g. A student might read the word *on* as *no with the letter order transposed*, or *saw* as *was*, or spell *girl* as *gril*.

In the 1970s, through observation, researchers discovered that reversing and transposing letters are very common among typical first graders just learning to read.

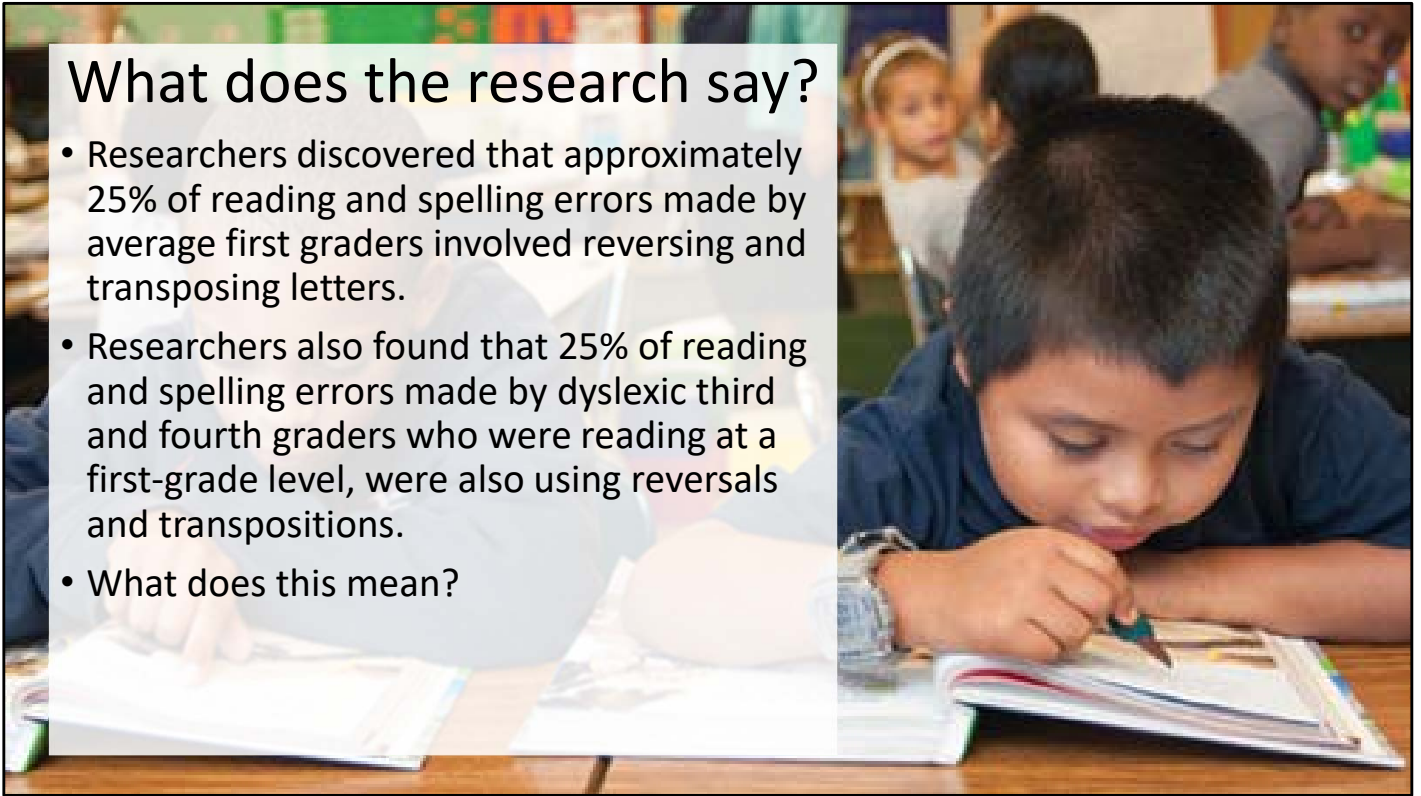


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## What does the research say?

- Researchers discovered that approximately 25% of reading and spelling errors made by average first graders involved reversing and transposing letters.
- Researchers also found that 25% of reading and spelling errors made by dyslexic third and fourth graders who were reading at a first-grade level, were also using reversals and transpositions.
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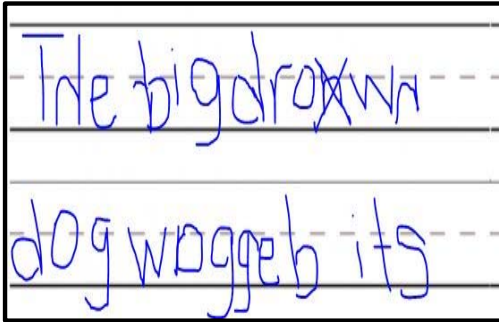
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XWhat does this mean?





## And the Answer is...



- This means that there is no mysterious basis for reversals and transpositions among weak/dyslexic readers.
- These weak readers are making reading and spelling mistakes that anyone would make who are at that early reading level.
- Reversals and transpositions are a *side effect* of continuing to be at the earliest stages of reading development.
- In other words, ***they are not poor readers because they are reversing or transposing letters, rather they are reversing and transposing letters because they are poor readers.***

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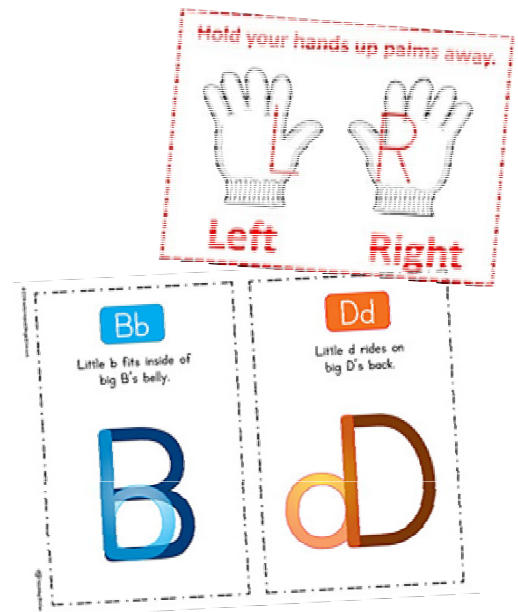
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# Reversals and Transpositions

- First, make sure students are progressing overall in reading.
- Second, make sure the student knows his/her *right* from his/her *left*.
- Reversals tend to be as much a language/labeling difficulty as a visual-spatial difficulty.
- Teach the phrases, “be right” and “Dee left.”
- Make knowing left from right part of pre-K and kindergarten curriculum.
- A *quick trick* is to have right-handed kids to squeeze the hand they write with. Left-handers learn the opposite.



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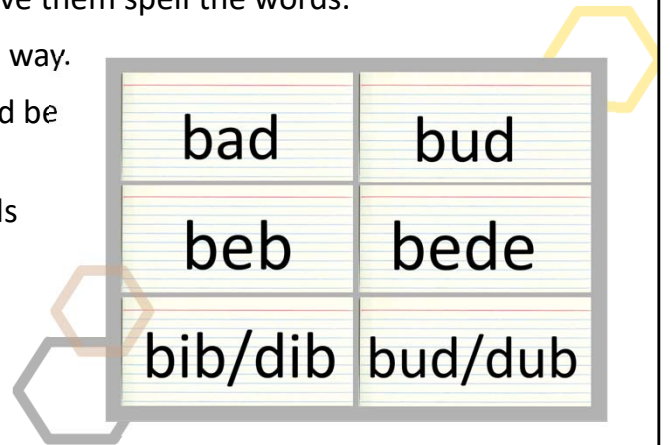
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# Addressing Reversals

- Using flashcards, have students read and spell words that forces them to distinguish between confusable letters.
- For example, have students with b/d issues learn to read words with b's and d's quickly and accurately. (See Word Lists pg. 119.) Also have them spell the words.
- Other letter confusions can be treated the same way.
- Included with the words in the flashcards, should be the letters b and d in isolation.
- Flashcards should include 3, 4, and 5 letter words with the targeted letters occurring twice.
- In addition, use nonsense words that include targeted letters.



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# Word Reading Disabilities

- For each of the mental and academic skills that contribute to word recognition and word identification, there is a continuum along which students can fall.
- On page 120, refer to Figure 14.1, *The Skills that Determine Word Recognition and Word Identification Each Viewed Along its Respective Continuum*.
- What might be a more useful way of looking at weak readers is to create a profile, showing where along a skills continuum a student falls for the skills necessary for word recognition and identification.
- Skills could include oral vocabulary, letter-sound knowledge, phoneme awareness, oral blending, rapid automatized naming, working memory and phonic decoding.



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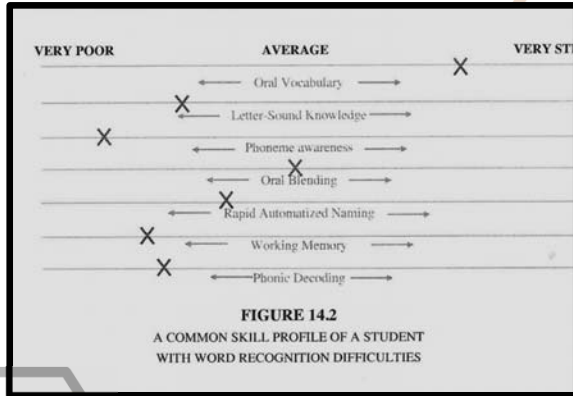
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# Student Profile



- Reading disabilities, dyslexia, or even mild reading difficulties can be better understood when we identify the source of the difficulty.
- Consider Figure 14.2, p. 121, which reflects a common skill profile of a poor word-level reader.
- The student in the profile is strong in higher level language skills , but weak in phoneme awareness. His letter-sound skills are okay but need to improve.
- Working memory is weak. Any negative impact working memory may have on word reading can be minimized by expanding the student’s sight vocabulary.

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# Reading Disabilities

- Researchers have discovered that *dyslexia* and *reading disabilities* do not differ qualitatively from the simple concept of poor word-level reading.
- These are terms that describe students at the bottom end of the continuum of reading skills.
- We need to address all word reading difficulties with a similar approach of determining the parts of the process that are not working and address those concerns.
- Our reading curriculum should take these skills into account to prevent reading difficulties in the first place.
- The research finding and the techniques found in *Equipped for Reading Success* should be used both in general and special education.



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## RtI and MTSS



Equipped for Reading Success was designed for:

- The prevention of reading difficulties
- Remediating mild reading problems
- Addressing and correcting more serious reading disabilities

In many states, under RTI, a student is designated as having a learning disability if he or she does not respond adequately to high quality, research-based instruction and intervention.

In Colorado, a child is determined to have a *Specific Learning Disability* when the child does not achieve adequately for the child's age or to meet State-approved grade-level standards and the child does not make sufficient progress to meet age or State-approved grade level standards.

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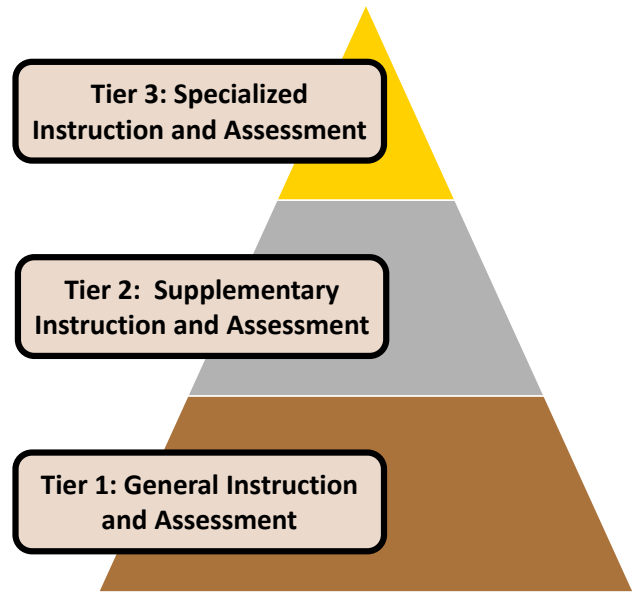
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# The 3-Tiered System

## **RTI is conceptualized as having 3 Tiers:**

- Tier 1:** High quality, research-based instruction for all students in general education classrooms
- Tier 2:** Research-based intervention in a small group, general education remedial setting
- Tier 3:** Data-based individualization for students with intensive needs



In 2004, Congress re-appropriated the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)*. An additional way of designating a student with a *specific learning disability (SLD)*, was based on *Response to Intervention (RTI)*.

Using Rtl, in Colorado, a student is designated as having a specific learning disability if the child does not achieve adequately for the child's age and the child does not make sufficient progress when using a process based on the child's response to scientific, research-based intervention.

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## RTI and Equipped for Reading Success

The material in the Equipped for Reading Success Program is intended to address needs in all three tiers of RTI and Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).

Supportive activities for all three tiers include:

- Train phonological awareness from kindergarten to early third grade
- Train letter-sound skills from kindergarten until mastered
- Use a developmental reading approach.
- Use various teaching techniques that promote mapping.

The biggest difference between the tiers is the time and intensity of instruction. Scaffolded techniques are chosen according to the needs of the students. Tier 3 instruction may also involve small groups sizes.

There is much overlap between the levels.



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## Concluding Comments

*“ ...I have seen youngsters begin school with excitement and eagerness to learn but eventually hate school because it was such a struggle due to their reading problems. So, after immersing myself in the scientific research on reading acquisition and reading difficulties, it became clear to me that most reading problems are preventable, and those that are not preventable can still be substantially improved. When I combined this research knowledge with my firsthand experience, it was difficult not to become enthusiastic about this information. I have thus developed a passion to get the word out to teachers and administrators that we can make an incredible difference in the lives of students who are at a grave educational disadvantage. Word-level reading difficulties take their toll psychologically, educationally, behaviorally, and often in terms of future career opportunities.”*

David A. Kilpatrick, Ph.D.

To end our webinar series on this leading-edge program, I leave you with this quote from David Kilpatrick:

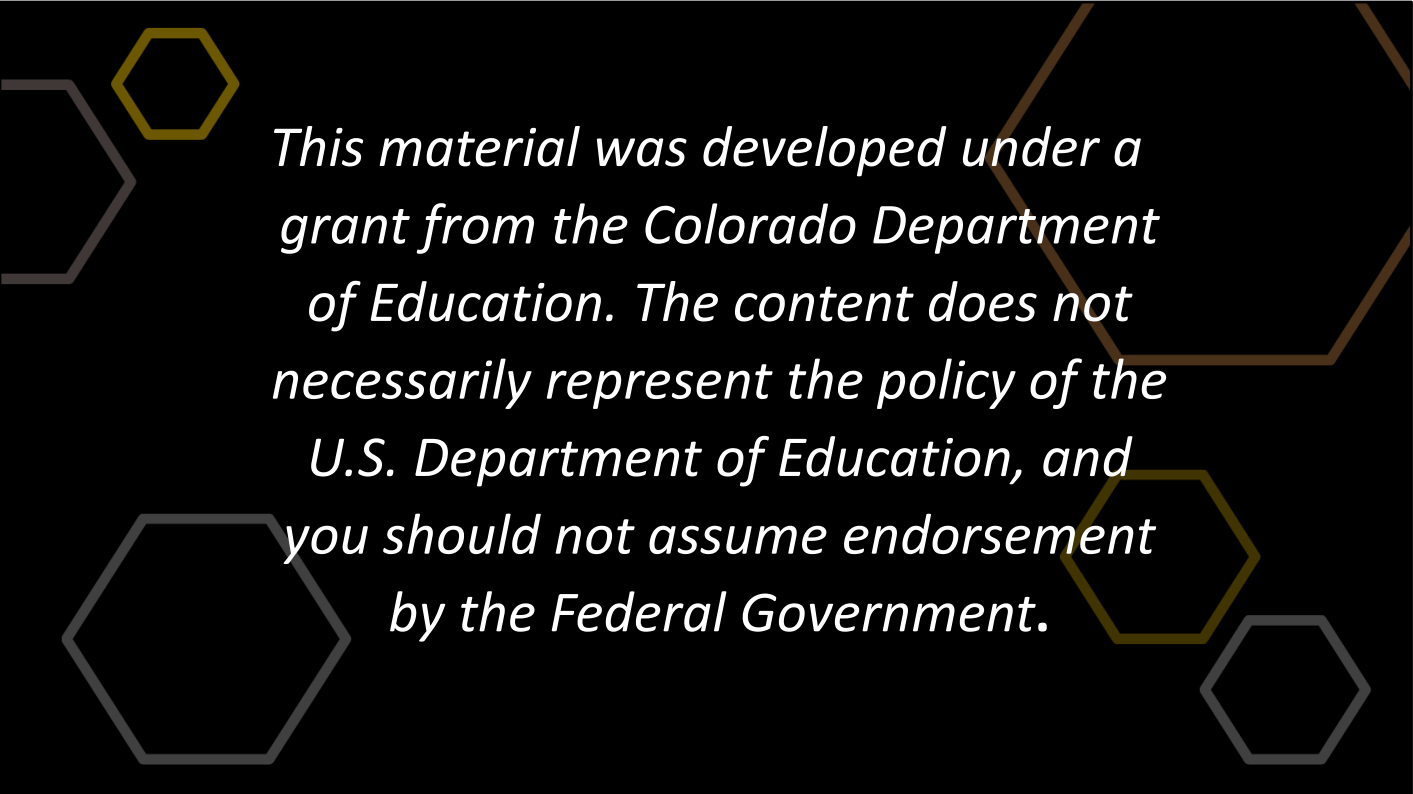
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And to teachers all over the state of Colorado; I thank you for your participation, for being a life-long learner, and thank you for all you do for children. What you do is so important. I am proud to be in your company.

Thanks also to the Colorado Department of Education Exceptional Student Services Unit, particularly Veronica Fiedler for her help and support, and to the author, Dave Kilpatrick for his involvement and valuable feedback.

This is Deb Hoesterey, your moderator. My best to you all in your educational endeavors.





*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.*



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

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

