

DYSLEXIA

Donna M. Scanlon
Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning



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School of Education
THE WORLD WITHIN REACH

My Background

- PhD in educational psychology and methodology
- Professor, Department of Literacy Teaching and Learning
- Director, Child Research and Study Center
- Research foci:
 - Causes and correlates of reading difficulty
 - Relationships between instructional characteristics and literacy learning outcomes
 - Improving teacher knowledge and practices to reduce the incidence of and remediate reading difficulties
- Licensed psychologist
- Member
 - National Reading First Federal Advisory Committee, United States Department of Education (2007 – 2009)
 - Society for the Scientific Study of Reading
 - Review panels for the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and the Institute of Education Sciences

What is the difference between dyslexia, (specific) reading disability, and reading difficulties in general?

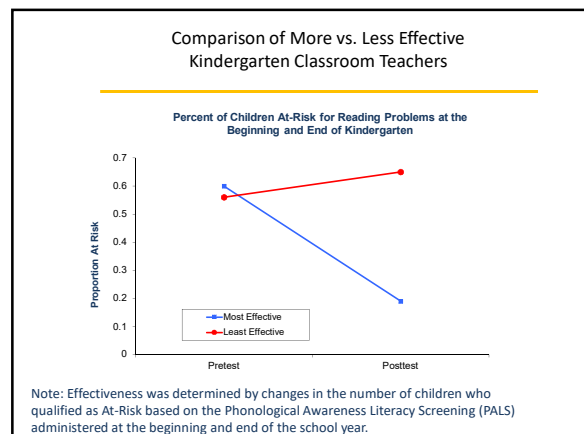
- In the research literature, the terms dyslexia and reading disability tend to be used interchangeably.
- Until 15-20 years ago, the distinction between reading disability/dyslexia and poor reading was based on the existence of an IQ-Achievement discrepancy.
- Today, limited response to instruction/intervention(s) is often the criterion used to place readers in the disabled/dyslexic category.
 - There is no widespread agreement on what constitutes limited response.

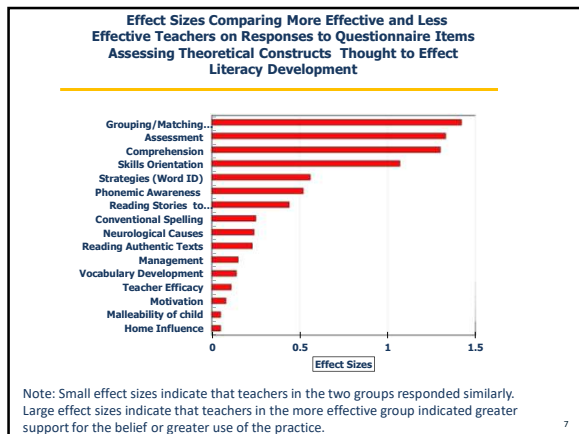
Dyslexia/Specific Reading Difficulties

- Manifest as difficulties with accurately and quickly reading the words in texts.
- This may be due to:
 - Limited understanding of and/or skill with the alphabetic code
 - Limited engagement in reading connected text
 - Limited engagement in meaning making while reading
 - Limited oral language
 - Limited confidence – limited engagement

Points of Agreement among Educational Professionals

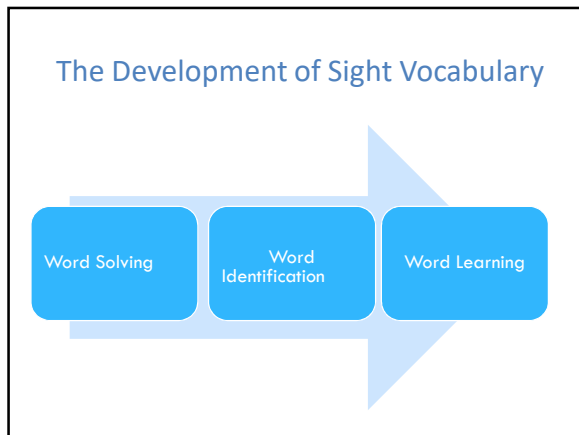
- Some children experience difficulties in literacy acquisition.
 - Sometimes extreme difficulties
- Genetic factors contribute to some literacy learning difficulties.
- Many literacy learning difficulties can be traced to experiential and instructional factors.



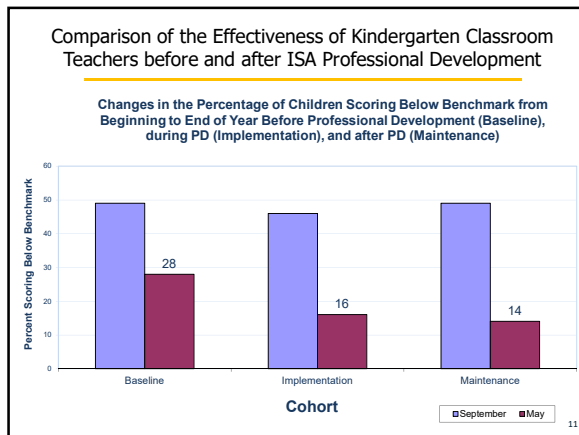


A proficient reader's sight vocabulary is huge!

- Estimates vary but are typically in excess of 40,000 to 50,000 words.
- Teachers cannot possibly teach all of those words.
- Children build their sight vocabularies through strategic word solving while reading. Ideally, they would use:
 - Code based strategies to hypothesize about the pronunciation of unfamiliar words
 - Meaning based strategies to check/confirm that the word is a real word that fits the context in which it was encountered.
- Being able to accurately and quickly identify most of the words in a text enables the reader to devote most of his/her thinking to understanding the meaning of the text.
- Children who understand the texts they read are more likely to be motivated to read more, thereby increasing their opportunities to learn about the world and to continue to build their sight vocabularies.

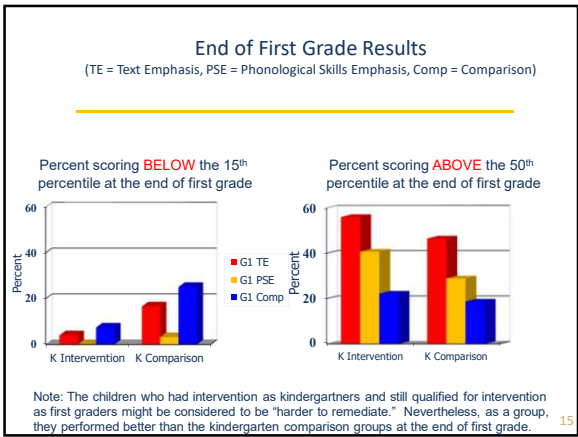
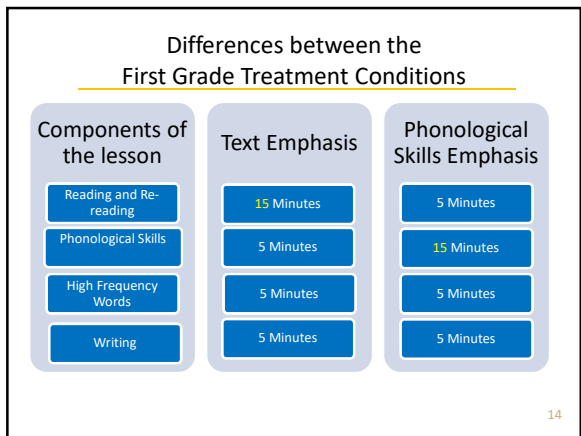
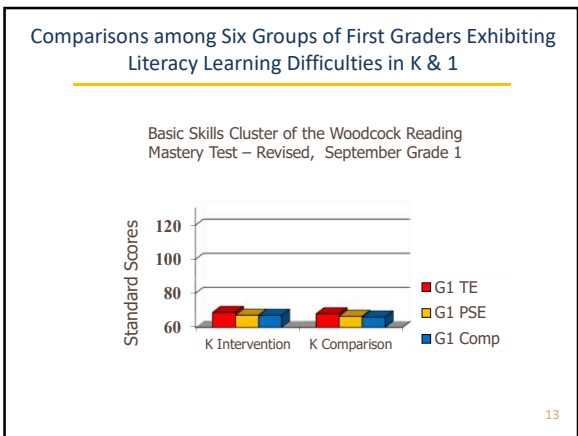


- ### Instructional Goals of the Interactive Strategies Approach (Scanlon, Anderson & Sweeney, 2017)
- **Motivation to Read and Write**
 - **Alphabetic**
 - Purposes and Conventions of Print
 - Phonological Awareness
 - Letter Naming
 - Letter-Sound Association
 - The Alphabetic Principle and the Alphabetic Code – Early Development
 - Phonograms and Word Families
 - The Alphabetic Principle and Alphabetic Code – Later Development
 - Morphological Units and Multisyllabic Words
 - **Word Learning**
 - Strategic Word Learning
 - High Frequency Words
 - **Meaning Construction**
 - Fluency
 - Vocabulary and Oral Language skills
 - Comprehension and General Knowledge



More Points of Agreement among Educational Professionals

- Early intervention reduces the number for children who demonstrate long-term reading difficulties.
- Intervention in the early primary grades is more effective in reducing the incidence of serious reading difficulty than intervention provided in the middle elementary grades and beyond.
 - We need to close the gaps in literacy skill early before the grow and become disabling.



- ### Conclusions Based on Research
- Most reading difficulties related to word reading skills can be prevented through effective instruction provided by classroom and intervention teachers in the early grades.
 - Children’s literacy skills grow at different rates, instruction needs to be responsive to those differences.
 - Children need to learn about the workings of the alphabetic code and how to apply that knowledge in puzzling through unfamiliar words encountered while reading.
 - Teacher knowledge and practice is an important determinant of literacy learners’ development – especially those who demonstrate the weakest skills.

- ### What is the Research Evidence in Support of the Most Widely Advocated Approaches to Treating Dyslexia/Reading Disability?
- The National Reading Panel found only four studies using the Orton-Gillingham approach that had sufficient methodological rigor for inclusion and only two demonstrated positive effects.
 - In one study, there was a large negative impact on reading a year after participation in the intervention.
 - Torgesen et al. (2006 & 2007) found that word-level interventions (including Wilson) improved word-level reading but not comprehension for 3rd and 5th grade struggling readers. In some cases the impact was negative.
 - Vaughn and Linan-Thompson (2003) report that research has “offered no compelling evidence” (p. 142) that a multisensory approach can benefit children with reading difficulties.
 - The Federal Reading First program (final report issued in 2009) resulted in substantial increases in phonics skills, but no increases in reading comprehension.
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- Shaywitz, Morris, and Shaywitz (2008) state “Evidence is not yet available that would allow the selection of one specific program over others or to support the choice of an individual program that would be specifically more beneficial to particular groups of dyslexic readers” (p. 463).
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- Every child is ready to learn something, but they are not all ready to learn the same thing.
- Responsive and comprehensive instruction provided by knowledgeable teachers is critical.

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Thank you for your time.