Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading
International Dyslexia Association

Executive Summary

Reading Difficulties, Including Dyslexia, Are Very Common

Reading difficulties are the most common cause of academic failure and underachievement. Learning to read and write is not natural or easy for many—if not most—students, especially those with dyslexia and related language problems. The National Assessment of Educational Progress consistently finds that about 36% of all fourth graders read at a level described as "below basic." Between 15 and 20% of young students are doomed to academic failure because of reading and language processing weaknesses, unless those weaknesses are recognized early and treated skillfully. Another 20–30% are at risk for inadequate reading and writing development, depending on how—and how well—they are taught. Most of these at-risk students are ineligible for special education services and are dependent on the instruction given in the regular classroom or other supplementary services. However, of those students who are referred to special education services in public schools, approximately 85% are having severe difficulties with language, reading, and writing. Clearly, responsibility for teaching reading and writing must be shared by classroom teachers, reading specialists, and special education personnel.

Effective Instruction Is Key

Although dyslexia and related reading and language problems may originate with neurobiological differences, they are mainly treated with skilled teaching. Informed and effective classroom instruction, especially in the early grades, can prevent or at least effectively address and limit the severity of reading and writing problems. Potential reading failure can be recognized as early as preschool and kindergarten, if not sooner. A large body of research evidence shows that with appropriate, intensive instruction, all but the most severe reading disabilities can be ameliorated in the early grades and students can get on track toward academic success. For those students with persistent dyslexia who need specialized instruction outside of the regular class, competent intervention from a specialist can lessen the impact of the disorder and help the student overcome and manage the most debilitating symptoms.

What is the nature of effective instruction for students at risk? The methods supported by research are those that are explicit, systematic, cumulative, and multisensory, in that they integrate listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The content of effective instruction emphasizes the structure of language, including the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), meaning relationships among words and their referents (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse. The strategies emphasize planning, organization, attention to task, critical thinking, and self-management. While all such aspects of teaching are essential for students with dyslexia, these strategies also enhance the potential of all students.

Are Teachers Prepared?

Teaching language, reading, and writing effectively, especially to students experiencing difficulty, requires considerable knowledge and skill. Regrettably, the licensing and professional development practices currently endorsed by many states are insufficient for the preparation and support of teachers and specialists. Researchers are finding that those with reading specialist and special education licenses often know no more about research-based, effective practices than those with general education teaching licenses. The majority of practitioners at all levels have not been prepared in sufficient depth to prevent reading problems, to recognize early signs of risk, or to teach students with dyslexia and related learning disabilities successfully. Inquiries into teacher preparation in reading have revealed a pervasive absence of rich content and academic rigor in many courses that lead to certification of teachers and specialists. Analyses of teacher licensing tests show that typically, very few are aligned with current research on effective instruction for students at risk. When tests are aligned with scientific research, far too many teacher candidates are unable to pass them. To address these gaps and promote more rigorous, meaningful, and effective teacher preparation and professional development, IDA has adopted this set of knowledge and practice standards.

Standards for Practice

IDA's *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading* provide a content framework for courses and course sequences. In addition, they delineate proficiency requirements for practical application of this content (e.g., interpretation of assessments, delivery of differentiated instruction, and successful intervention with a child or adult with a reading disability). The first section specifies what all teachers of reading should know and be able to do, as well as ethical standards for the profession. The second section offers guidelines for the additional practical teaching skills necessary for teaching students with dyslexia and related difficulties. The standards are organized and presented in the following order:

SECTION I: Knowledge and Practice Standards
1. Foundation Concepts about Oral and Written Language Learning
2. Knowledge of the Structure of Language
3. Knowledge of Dyslexia and Other Learning Disorders
4. Interpretation and Administration of Assessments for Planning Instruction
5. Structured Language Teaching:
    1. Phonology
    2. Phonics and Word Study
    3. Fluent, Automatic Reading of Text
    4. Vocabulary
    5. Text Comprehension
    6. Handwriting, Spelling, Written Expression
6. Ethical Standards for the Profession

SECTION II: Guidelines Pertaining to Supervised Practice of Teachers of Students with Documented Reading Disabilities or Dyslexia Who Work in School, Clinical, or Private Practice Settings

      A.   Level I expectations for teachers.

      B.   Level II expectations for specialists.

Guidance and Support for Teachers

In summary, learning to teach reading, language, and writing is a complex undertaking. The competence and expertise of teachers can be nourished with training that emphasizes the study of reading development, language, and individual differences. In addition, teachers need supervised practice opportunities to be successful, especially if they are responsible for students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties. If teachers are better prepared, the impact of reading difficulties, including dyslexia, will be lessened and many more students will receive the instruction and support that they require to reach their potential. We owe them no less.

Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of These Standards

The International Dyslexia Association (IDA) offers these standards to guide the preparation, certification, and professional development of those who teach reading and related literacy skills in classroom, remedial, and clinical settings. The term *teacher* is used throughout this document to refer to any person whose responsibilities include reading instruction. The standards aim to specify what any individual responsible for teaching reading should know and be able to do so that reading difficulties, including dyslexia, may be prevented, alleviated, or remediated. In addition, the standards seek to differentiate classroom teachers from therapists or specialists who are qualified to work with the most challenging students.

Although programs that certify or support teachers, clinicians, or specialists differ in their preparation methodologies, teaching approaches, and organizational purposes, they should ascribe to a common set of professional standards for the benefit of the students they serve. Compliance with these standards should assure the public that individuals who teach in public and private schools, as well as those who teach in clinics, are prepared to implement scientifically based and clinically proven practices.

Background: Why These Standards Are Necessary

Reading difficulties are the most common cause of academic failure and underachievement. The National Assessment of Educational Progress consistently finds that about 36% of all fourth graders read at a level described as "below basic." Between 15 and 20% of young students demonstrate significant weaknesses with language processes, including but not limited to phonological processing, that are the root cause of dyslexia and related learning difficulties. Of those who are referred to special education services in public schools, approximately 85% are referred because of their problems with language, reading, and/or writing. Informed and effective classroom instruction, especially in the early grades, can prevent and relieve the severity of many of these problems. For those students with dyslexia who need specialized instruction outside of the regular class, competent intervention from a specialist can lessen the impact of the disorder and help the student overcome the most debilitating symptoms.

Teaching reading effectively, especially to students experiencing difficulty, requires considerable knowledge and skill. Regrettably, current licensing and professional development practices endorsed by many states are insufficient for the preparation and support of teachers and specialists. Researchers are finding that those with reading specialist and special education licenses often know no more about research-based, effective practices than those with a general education teaching license. The majority of practitioners at all levels have not been prepared in sufficient depth to recognize early signs of risk, to prevent reading problems, or to teach students with dyslexia and related learning disabilities successfully. Inquiries into teacher preparation in reading have a revealed a pervasive absence of substantive content and academic rigor in many courses that lead to certification of teachers and specialists. Analyses of teacher licensing tests show that typically, very few are aligned with current research on effective instruction for students at risk. To address these gaps, IDA has adopted these standards for knowledge, practice, and ethical conduct.

Research-based Assumptions about Dyslexia and Other Reading Difficulties

These standards are broadly constructed to address the knowledge and skill base for teaching reading in preventive, intervention, and remedial settings. Underlying the standards are assumptions about the nature, prevalence, manifestations, and treatments for dyslexia that are supported by research and by accepted diagnostic guidelines. These assumptions characterize dyslexia in relation to other reading problems and learning difficulties, as follows:

- Dyslexia is a language-based disorder of learning to read and write originating from a core or basic problem with phonological processing intrinsic to the individual. Its primary symptoms are inaccurate and/or slow printed word recognition and poor spelling – problems that in turn affect reading fluency and comprehension and written expression. Other types of reading disabilities include specific difficulties with reading comprehension and/or speed of processing (reading fluency). These problems may exist in relative isolation or may overlap extensively in individuals with reading difficulties.
- Dyslexia often exists in individuals with aptitudes, talents, and abilities that enable them to be successful in many domains.
- Dyslexia often coexists with other developmental difficulties and disabilities, including problems with attention, memory, and executive function.
- Dyslexia exists on a continuum. Many students with milder forms of dyslexia are never officially diagnosed and are not eligible for special education services. They deserve appropriate instruction in the regular classroom and through other intervention programs.
- Appropriate recognition and treatment of dyslexia is the responsibility of all educators and support personnel in a school system, not just the reading or special education teacher.
- Although early intervention is the most effective approach, individuals with dyslexia and other reading difficulties can be helped at any age.

How to Use These Standards

The standards outline the 1) content knowledge necessary to teach reading and writing to students with dyslexia or related disorders or who are at risk for reading difficulty; 2) practices of effective instruction; and 3) ethical conduct expected of professional educators and clinicians. Regular classroom teachers should also have the foundational knowledge of language, literacy development, and individual differences because they share responsibility for preventing and ameliorating reading problems.

The standards may be used for several purposes, including but not limited to:
- course design within teacher certification programs;
- practicum requirements within certification programs;
- criteria for membership in IDA's coalition of organizations that provide training and supervision of teachers, tutors, and specialists (note that additional requirements for membership are to be determined);
- criteria for the preparation of those professionals receiving referrals through IDA offices; and
- a content framework for the development of licensing or certification examinations.

How to Read the Standards

The Standards include two major sections. Section I addresses foundation concepts, knowledge of language structure, knowledge of dyslexia and other learning disorders, administration and interpretation of assessments, the principles of structured language teaching, and ethical standards for the profession. Section II addresses skills to be demonstrated in supervised practice. In Section I, Standards A, B, C, and E are presented in two columns. The column on the left refers to content knowledge that can be learned and tested independent of observed teaching competency. The column on the right delineates the practical skills of teaching that depend on or that are driven by content knowledge. The exception to this format is Standard D. It includes a third column on the right that specifies in greater detail what the teacher or specialist should be able to do.

Many of the standards are followed by the designation of (Level1) or (Level 2). These designations indicate whether the standard should be met by novice teachers in training (Level 1) or by specialists with more experience and greater expertise (Level 2). In Section II, the recommended standards for preparation of teachers and specialists are distinguished by these two levels.

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SECTION I: KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE STANDARDS

A. Foundation Concepts about Oral and Written Learning

Content Knowledge	Application
1. Understand and explain the language processing requirements of proficient reading and writing • Phonological (speech sound) processing • Orthographic (print) processing • Semantic (meaning) processing • Syntactic (sentence level) processing • Discourse (connected text level) processing	1. a. Explain the domains of language and their importance to proficient reading and writing (Level 1). b. Explain a scientifically valid model of the language processes underlying reading and writing (Level 2).
2. Understand and explain other aspects of cognition and behavior that affect reading and writing • Attention • Executive function • Memory • Processing speed • Graphomotor control	2. a. Recognize that reading difficulties coexist with other cognitive and behavioral problems (Level 1). b. Explain a scientifically valid model of other cognitive influences on reading and writing, and explain major research findings regarding the contribution of linguistic and cognitive factors to the prediction of literacy outcomes (Level 2).
3. Define and identify environmental, cultural, and social factors that contribute to literacy development (e.g., language spoken at home, language and literacy experiences, cultural values).	3. Identify (Level 1) or explain (Level 2) major research findings regarding the contribution of environmental factors to literacy outcomes.
4. Know and identify phases in the typical developmental progression of • Oral language (semantic, syntactic, pragmatic) • Phonological skill • Printed word recognition • Spelling • Reading fluency • Reading comprehension • Written expression	4. Match examples of student responses and learning behavior to phases in language and literacy development (Level 1).
5. Understand and explain the known causal relationships among phonological skill, phonic decoding, spelling, accurate and automatic word recognition, text reading fluency, background knowledge, verbal reasoning skill, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing.	5. Explain how a weakness in each component skill of oral language, reading, and writing may affect other related skills and processes across time (Level 2).

Content Knowledge	Application
6. Know and explain how the relationships among the major components of literacy development change with reading development (i.e., changes in oral language, including phonological awareness; phonics and word recognition; spelling; reading and writing fluency; vocabulary; reading comprehension skills and strategies; written expression).	6. Identify the most salient instructional needs of students who are at different points of reading and writing development (Level 2).
7. Know reasonable goals and expectations for learners at various stages of reading and writing development.	7. Given case study material, explain why a student is/is not meeting goals and expectations in reading or writing for his or her age/grade (Level 1).

Explanatory Notes

An extensive research base exists on the abilities that are important in learning to read and write, including how these abilities interact with each other, how they are influenced by experience, and how they change across development. Teachers' knowledge of this research base is an essential foundation for the competencies and skills described in subsequent sections of this document.

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B. Knowledge of the Structure of Language

Content Knowledge	Application
Phonology (The Speech Sound System) 1. Identify, pronounce, classify, and compare the consonant and vowel phonemes of English.	1. a. Identify similar or contrasting features among phonemes (Level 1). b. Reconstruct the consonant and vowel phoneme inventories and identify the feature differences between and among phonemes (Level 2).
Orthography (The Spelling System) 2. Understand the broad outline of historical influences on English spelling patterns, especially Anglo-Saxon, Latin (Romance), and Greek.	2. Recognize typical words from the historical layers of English (Anglo-Saxon, Latin/Romance, Greek) (Level 1).
3. Define *grapheme* as a functional correspondence unit or representation of a phoneme.	3. Accurately map graphemes to phonemes in any English word (Level 1).
4. Recognize and explain common orthographic rules and patterns in English.	4. Sort words by orthographic "choice" pattern; analyze words by suffix ending patterns and apply suffix ending rules.
5. Know the difference between "high frequency" and "irregular" words.	5. Identify printed words that are the exception to regular patterns and spelling principles; sort high frequency words into regular and exception words (Level 1).
6. Identify, explain, and categorize six basic syllable types in English spelling.	6. Sort, pronounce, and combine regular written syllables and apply the most productive syllable division principles (Level 1).
Morphology 7. Identify and categorize common morphemes in English, including Anglo-Saxon compounds, inflectional suffixes, and derivational suffixes; Latin-based prefixes, roots, and derivational suffixes; and Greek-based combining forms.	7. a. Recognize the most common prefixes, roots, suffixes, and combining forms in English content words, and analyze words at both the syllable and morpheme levels (Level 1). b. Recognize advanced morphemes (e.g., chameleon prefixes) (Level 2).
Semantics 8. Understand and identify examples of meaningful word relationships or semantic organization.	8. Match or identify examples of word associations, antonyms, synonyms, multiple meanings and uses, semantic overlap, and semantic feature analysis (Level 1).

Syntax	
9. Define and distinguish among phrases, dependent clauses, and independent clauses in sentence structure.	9. Construct and deconstruct simple, complex, and compound sentences (Level 1).
10. Identify the parts of speech and the grammatical role of a word in a sentence.	10. a. Identify the basic parts of speech and classify words by their grammatical role in a sentence (Level 1). b. Identify advanced grammatical concepts (e.g., infinitives, gerunds) (Level 2).
Discourse Organization 11. Explain the major differences between narrative and expository discourse.	11. Classify text by genre; identify features that are characteristic of each genre, and identify graphic organizers that characterize typical structures (Level 1).
12. Identify and construct expository paragraphs of varying logical structures (e.g., classification, reason, sequence).	12. Identify main idea sentences, connecting words, and topics that fit each type of expository paragraph organization (Level 2).
13. Identify cohesive devices in text and inferential gaps in the surface language of text.	13. Analyze text for the purpose of identifying the inferences that students must make to comprehend (Level 2).

Explanatory Notes

Formal knowledge about the structure of language—recognizing, for example, whether words are phonetically regular or irregular; common morphemes in words; and common sentence structures in English—is not an automatic consequence of high levels of adult literacy. However, without this kind of knowledge, teachers may have difficulty interpreting assessments correctly or may provide unintentionally confusing instruction to students. For instance, struggling readers are likely to be confused if they are encouraged to sound out a word that is phonetically irregular (e.g., *some*), or if irregular words, such as *come* and *have*, are used as examples of a syllable type such as "silent e." Similarly, to teach spelling and writing effectively, teachers need a knowledge base about language structure, including sentence and discourse structure. Research suggests that acquiring an understanding of language structure often requires explicit teaching of this information and more than superficial coverage in teacher preparation and professional development.
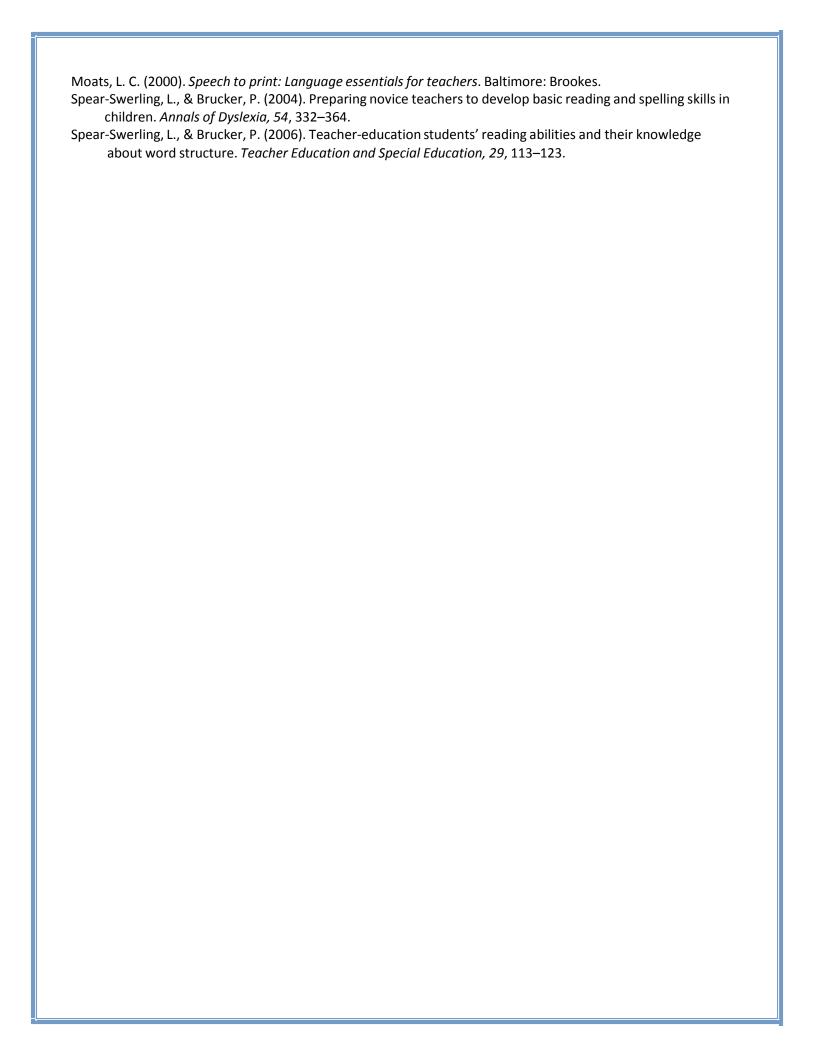
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C. Knowledge of Dyslexia and Other Learning Disorders

Content Knowledge	Application
1. Understand the most common intrinsic differences between good and poor readers (i.e., cognitive, neurobiological, and linguistic).	1. a. Recognize scientifically accepted characteristics of individuals with poor word recognition (e.g., overdependence on context to aid word recognition; inaccurate nonword reading) (Level 1). b. Identify student learning behaviors and test profiles typical of students with dyslexia and related learning difficulties. (Level 2).
2. Recognize the tenets of the NICHD/IDA definition of dyslexia.	2. Explain the reasoning or evidence behind the main points in the definition (Level 1).
3. Recognize that dyslexia and other reading difficulties exist on a continuum of severity.	3. Recognize levels of instructional intensity, duration, and scope appropriate for mild, moderate, and severe reading disabilities (Level 1).
4. Identify the distinguishing characteristics of dyslexia and related reading and learning disabilities (including developmental language comprehension disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, disorders of written expression or dysgraphia, mathematics learning disorder, nonverbal learning disorders, etc.).	4. Match symptoms of the major subgroups of poor readers as established by research, including those with dyslexia, and identify typical case study profiles of those individuals (Level 2).
5. Identify how symptoms of reading difficulty may change over time in response to development and instruction.	5. Identify predictable ways that symptoms might change as students move through the grades (Level 2).
6. Understand federal and state laws that pertain to learning disabilities, especially reading disabilities and dyslexia.	6. a. Explain the most fundamental provisions of federal and state laws pertaining to the rights of students with disabilities, especially students' rights to a free, appropriate public education, an individualized educational plan, services in the least restrictive environment, and due process (Level 1). b. Appropriately implement federal and state laws in identifying and serving students with learning disabilities, reading disabilities, and dyslexia (Level 2).

Explanatory Notes

To identify children with dyslexia and other learning disabilities, teachers must understand and recognize the key symptoms of these disorders, as well as how the disorders differ from each other. In order to plan instruction and detect older students with learning disabilities who may have been overlooked in the early grades, teachers also should understand how students' difficulties may change over time, based on developmental patterns, experience, and instruction, as well as on increases in expectations across grades.

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D. Interpretation and Administration of Assessments for Planning Instruction

Content Knowledge	Application	Observable Competencies for Teaching Students with Dyslexia and Related Difficulties
1. Understand the differences among screening, diagnostic, outcome, and progress-monitoring assessments.	1. Match each type of assessment and its purpose (Level 1).	1. Administer screenings and progress monitoring assessments (Level 1)
2. Understand basic principles of test construction, including reliability, validity, and norm-referencing, and know the most well-validated screening tests designed to identify students at risk for reading difficulties.	2. Match examples of technically adequate, well-validated screening, diagnostic, outcome, and progress-monitoring assessments (Level 1).	2. Explain why individual students are or are not at risk in reading based on their performance on screening assessments (Level 1).
3. Understand the principles of progress-monitoring and the use of graphs to indicate progress.	3. Using case study data, accurately interpret progress-monitoring graphs to decide whether or not a student is making adequate progress (Level 1).	3. Display progress-monitoring data in graphs that are understandable to students and parents (Level 1).
4. Know the range of skills typically assessed by diagnostic surveys of phonological skills, decoding skills, oral reading skills, spelling, and writing.	4. Using case study data, accurately interpret subtest scores from diagnostic surveys to describe a student's patterns of strengths and weaknesses and instructional needs (Level 2).	4. Administer educational diagnostic assessments using standardized procedures (Level 2).
5. Recognize the content and purposes of the most common diagnostic tests used by psychologists and educational evaluators.	5. Find and interpret appropriate print and electronic resources for evaluating tests (Level 1).	5. Write reports that clearly and accurately summarize a student's current skills in important component areas of reading and reading comprehension (Level 2).
6. Interpret measures of reading comprehension and written expression in relation to an individual child's component profile.	6. Using case study data, accurately interpret a student's performance on reading comprehension or written expression measures and make appropriate instructional recommendations.	6. Write appropriate, specific recommendations for instruction and educational programming based on assessment data (Level 2).

Explanatory Notes

Teachers' ability to administer and interpret assessments accurately is essential both to early identification of students' learning problems and to planning effective instruction. Appropriate assessments enable teachers to recognize early signs that a child may be at risk for dyslexia or other learning disabilities, and the assessments permit teachers to target instruction to meet individual student's needs. Teachers should understand that there are different types of assessments for different purposes (e.g., brief but frequent assessments to monitor progress versus more lengthy, comprehensive assessments to provide detailed diagnostic information), as well as recognize which type of assessment is called for in a particular situation. Teachers need to know where to find unbiased information about the adequacy of published tests, and to interpret this information correctly, they require an understanding of basic principles of test construction and concepts such as reliability and validity. They also should understand how an individual student's component profile may influence his or her performance on a particular test, especially on broad measures of reading comprehension and written expression. For example, a child with very slow reading is likely to perform better on an untimed measure of reading comprehension than on a stringently timed measure; a child with writing problems may perform especially poorly on a reading comprehension test that requires lengthy written responses to open-ended questions.

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E-1. Structured Language Teaching: Phonology

Content Knowledge	Observable Competencies for Teaching Students with Dyslexia and Related Difficulties
1. Identify the general and specific goals of phonological skill instruction.	1. Explicitly state the goal of any phonological awareness teaching activity (Level 1).
2. Know the progression of phonological skill development (i.e., rhyme, syllable, onset-rime, phoneme differentiation).	2. a. Select and implement activities that match a student's developmental level of phonological skill (Level 1). b. Design and justify the implementation of activities that match a student's developmental level of phonological skill (Level 2).
3. Identify the differences among various phonological manipulations, including identifying, matching, blending, segmenting, substituting, and deleting sounds.	3. Demonstrate instructional activities that identify, match, blend, segment, substitute, and delete sounds (Level 1).
4. Understand the principles of phonological skill instruction: brief, multisensory, conceptual, and auditory-verbal.	4. a. Successfully produce vowel and consonant phonemes (Level 1). b. Teach articulatory features of phonemes and words; use minimally contrasting pairs of sounds and words in instruction; support instruction with manipulative materials and movement (Level 2).
5. Understand the reciprocal relationships among phonological processing, reading, spelling, and vocabulary.	5. a. Direct students' attention to speech sounds during reading, spelling, and vocabulary instruction using a mirror, discussion of articulatory features, and so on as scripted or prompted (Level 1). b. Direct students' attention to speech sounds during reading, spelling, and vocabulary instruction without scripting or prompting (Level 2).
6. Understand the phonological features of a second language, such as Spanish, and how they interfere with English pronunciation and phonics.	6. Explicitly contrast first and second language phonological systems, as appropriate, to anticipate which sounds may be most challenging for the second language learner (Level 2).

Explanatory Notes

Phonological awareness, basic print concepts, and knowledge of letter sounds are foundational areas of literacy. Without early, research-based intervention, children who struggle in these areas are likely to continue to have reading difficulties. Furthermore, poor phonological awareness is a core weakness in dyslexia. Ample research exists to inform teaching of phonological awareness, including research on the phonological skills to emphasize in instruction, appropriate sequencing of instruction, and integrating instruction in phonological awareness with instruction in alphabet knowledge. Teachers who understand how to teach these foundational skills effectively can prevent or ameliorate many children's reading problems, including those of students with dyslexia.

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E-2. Structured Language Teaching: Phonics and Word Recognition

Content Knowledge	Observable Competencies for Teaching Students with Dyslexia and Related Difficulties
1. Know or recognize how to order phonics concepts from easier to more difficult.	1. Plan lessons with a cumulative progression of word recognition skills that build one on another (Level 1).
2. Understand principles of explicit and direct teaching: model, lead, give guided practice, and review.	2. Explicitly and effectively teach (e.g., information taught is correct, students are attentive, teacher checks for understanding, teacher scaffolds students' learning) concepts of word recognition and phonics; apply concepts to reading single words, phrases, and connected text (Level 1).
3. State the rationale for multisensory and multimodal techniques.	3. Demonstrate the simultaneous use of two or three learning modalities (to include listening, speaking, movement, touch, reading, and/or writing) to increase engagement and enhance memory (Level 1).
4. Know the routines of a complete lesson format, from the introduction of a word recognition concept to fluent application in meaningful reading and writing.	4. Plan and effectively teach all steps in a decoding lesson, including single-word reading and connected text that is read fluently, accurately, and with appropriate intonation and expression (Level 1).
5. Understand research-based adaptations of instruction for students with weaknesses in working memory, attention, executive function, or processing speed.	5. Adapt the pace, format, content, strategy, or emphasis of instruction according to students' pattern of response (Level 2).

Explanatory Notes

The development of accurate word decoding skills—that is, the ability to read unfamiliar words by applying phonics knowledge—is an essential foundation for reading comprehension in all students. Decoding skills often are a central weakness for students with learning disabilities in reading, especially those with dyslexia. Teachers' abilities to provide explicit, systematic, appropriately sequenced instruction in phonics is indispensable to meet the needs of this population, as well as to help prevent reading problems in all beginning readers. Teachers should also understand the usefulness of multisensory, multimodal techniques in focusing students' attention on printed words, engaging students, and enhancing memory.

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E-3. Structured Language Teaching: Fluent, Automatic Reading of Text

Content Knowledge	Observable Competencies for Teaching Students with Dyslexia and Related Difficulties
1. Understand the role of fluency in word recognition, oral reading, silent reading, comprehension of written discourse, and motivation to read.	1. Assess students' fluency rate and determine reasonable expectations for reading fluency at various stages of reading development, using research-based guidelines and appropriate state and local standards and benchmarks (Level 1).
2. Understand reading fluency as a stage of normal reading development; as the primary symptom of some reading disorders; and as a consequence of practice and instruction.	2. Determine which students need a fluency-oriented approach to instruction, using screening, diagnostic, and progress-monitoring assessments (Level 2).
3. Define and identify examples of text at a student's frustration, instructional, and independent reading level.	3. Match students with appropriate texts as informed by fluency rate to promote ample independent oral and silent reading (Level 1).
4. Know sources of activities for building fluency in component reading skills.	4. Design lesson plans that incorporate fluency-building activities into instruction at sub-word and word levels (Level 1).
5. Know which instructional activities and approaches are most likely to improve fluency outcomes.	5. Design lesson plans with a variety of techniques to build reading fluency, such as repeated readings of passages, alternate oral reading with a partner, reading with a tape, or rereading the same passage up to three times. (Level 1).
6. Understand techniques to enhance student motivation to read.	6. Identify student interests and needs to motivate independent reading (Level 1).
7. Understand appropriate uses of assistive technology for students with serious limitations in reading fluency.	7. Make appropriate recommendations for use of assistive technology in general education classes for students with different reading profiles (e.g., dyslexia versus language disabilities) (Level 2).

Explanatory Notes

Reading fluency is the ability to read text effortlessly and quickly as well as accurately. Fluency develops among typical readers in the primary grades. Because fluency is a useful predictor of overall reading competence, especially in elementary-aged students, a variety of fluency tasks have been developed for use in screening and progress-monitoring measures. Furthermore, poor reading fluency is a very common symptom of dyslexia and other reading disabilities; problems with reading fluency can linger even when students' accuracy in word decoding has been improved through effective phonics intervention. Although fluency difficulties may sometimes be associated with processing weaknesses, considerable research supports the role of practice, wide exposure to printed words, and focused instruction in the development and remediation of fluency. To address students' fluency needs, teachers must have a range of competencies, including the ability to interpret fluency- based measures appropriately, to place students in appropriate types and levels of texts for reading instruction,
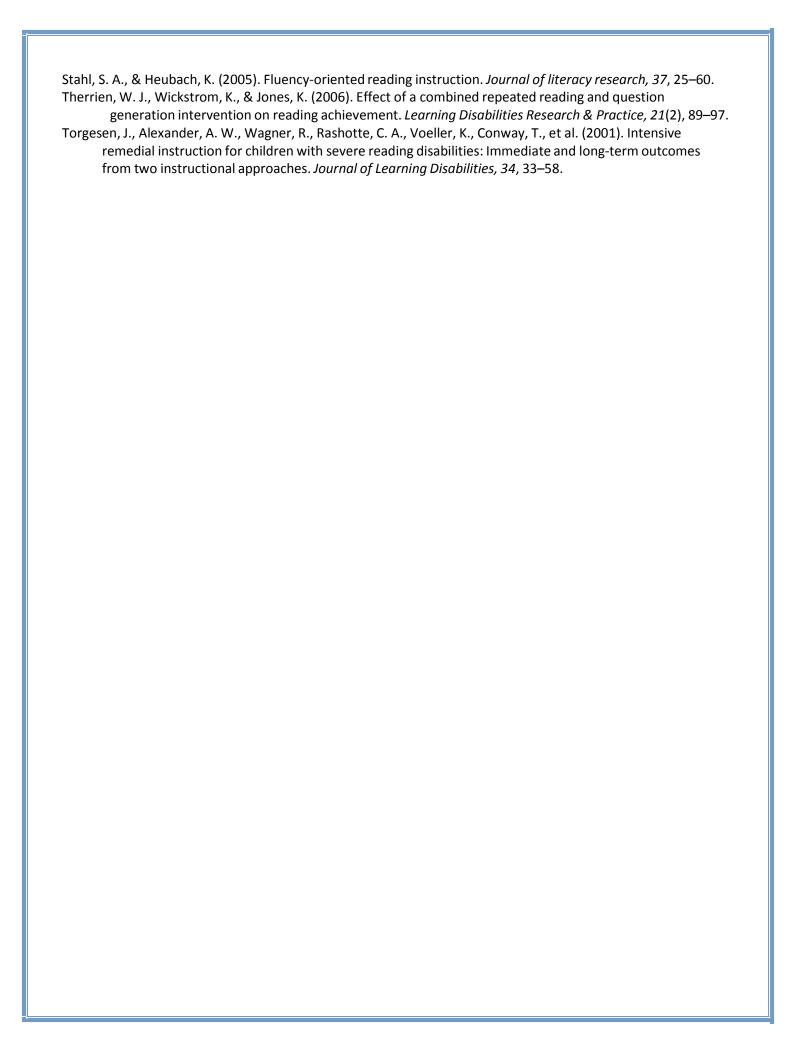
to stimulate students' independent reading, and to provide systematic fluency interventions for students who require them. Assistive technology (e.g., text-to-speech software) is often employed to help students with serious fluency difficulties function in general education settings. Therefore, teachers, and particularly specialists, require knowledge about the appropriate uses of this technology.

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E-4. Structured Language Teaching: Vocabulary

Content Knowledge	Observable Competencies for Teaching Students with Dyslexia and Related Difficulties
1. Understand the role of vocabulary development and vocabulary knowledge in comprehension.	1. Teach word meanings directly using contextual examples, structural (morpheme) analysis, antonyms and synonyms, definitions, connotations, multiple meanings, and semantic feature analysis (Levels 1 and 2).
2. Understand the role and characteristics of direct and indirect (contextual) methods of vocabulary instruction.	2. Lesson planning reflects: A. Selection of material for read-alouds and independent reading that will expand students' vocabulary. B. Identification of words necessary for direct teaching that should be known before the passage is read.
3. Know varied techniques for vocabulary instruction before, during, and after reading.	C. Repeated encounters with new words and multiple opportunities to use new words orally and in writing.
4. Understand that word knowledge is multifaceted.	D. Recurring practice and opportunities to use new words in writing and speaking.
5. Understand the sources of wide differences in students' vocabularies.	

Explanatory Notes

Vocabulary, or knowledge of word meanings, plays a key role in reading comprehension. Knowledge of words is multifaceted, ranging from partial recognition of the meaning of a word to deep knowledge and the ability to use the word effectively in speech or writing. Research supports both explicit, systematic teaching of word meanings and indirect methods of instruction such as those involving inferring meanings of words from sentence context or from word parts (e.g., common roots and affixes). Teachers should know how to develop students' vocabulary knowledge through both direct and indirect methods. They also should understand the importance of wide exposure to words, both orally and through reading, in students' vocabulary development. For example, although oral vocabulary knowledge frequently is a strength for students with dyslexia, over time, low volume of reading may tend to reduce these students' exposure to rich vocabulary relative to their typical peers; explicit teaching of word meanings and encouragement of wide independent reading in appropriate texts are two ways to help increase this exposure.

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E-5. Structured Language Teaching: Text Comprehension

Content Knowledge	Observable Competencies for Teaching Students with Dyslexia and Related Difficulties
1. Be familiar with teaching strategies that are appropriate before, during, and after reading and that promote reflective reading.	1. a. State purpose for reading, elicit or provide background knowledge, and explore key vocabulary (Level 1). b. Query during text reading to foster attention to detail, inference-making, and mental model construction (Level 1). c. Use graphic organizers, note-taking strategies, retelling and summarizing, and cross-text comparisons (Level 1).
2. Contrast the characteristics of major text genres, including narration, exposition, and argumentation.	2. Lesson plans reflect a range of genres, with emphasis on narrative and expository texts (Level 1).
3. Understand the similarities and differences between written composition and text comprehension, and the usefulness of writing in building comprehension.	3. Model, practice, and share written responses to text; foster explicit connections between new learning and what was already known (Level 1).
4. Identify in any text the phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs and "academic language" that could be a source of miscomprehension.	4. Anticipate confusions and teach comprehension of figurative language, complex sentence forms, cohesive devices, and unfamiliar features of text (Level 2).
5. Understand levels of comprehension including the surface code, text base, and mental model (situation model).	5. Plan lessons to foster comprehension of the surface code (the language), the text base (the underlying ideas), and a mental model (the larger context for the ideas) (Level 2).
6. Understand factors that contribute to deep comprehension, including background knowledge, vocabulary, verbal reasoning ability, knowledge of literary structures and conventions, and use of skills and strategies for close reading of text.	6. Adjust the emphasis of lessons to accommodate learners' strengths and weaknesses and pace of learning (Level 2).

Explanatory Notes

Good reading comprehension is the ultimate goal of reading instruction. Reading comprehension depends not only upon the component abilities discussed in previous sections, but also upon other factors, such as background knowledge and knowledge of text structure. In order to plan effective instruction and intervention in reading comprehension, teachers must understand the array of abilities that contribute to reading comprehension and use assessments to help pinpoint students' weaknesses. For instance, a typical student with dyslexia, whose reading comprehension problems are associated mainly with poor decoding and dysfluent reading, will need different emphases in intervention than will a poor comprehender whose problems revolve

around broad weaknesses in vocabulary and oral comprehension. In addition, teachers must be able to model and teach research-based comprehension strategies, such as summarization and the use of graphic organizers, as well as use methods that promote reflective reading and engagement. Oral comprehension and reading comprehension have a reciprocal relationship; good oral comprehension facilitates reading comprehension, but wide reading also contributes to the development of oral comprehension, especially in older students. Teachers should understand the relationships among oral language, reading comprehension, and written expression, and they should be able to use appropriate writing activities to build students' comprehension.

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E-6. Structured Language Teaching: Handwriting, Spelling, and Written Expression

Content Knowledge	Observable Competencies for Teaching Students with Dyslexia and Related Difficulties
Handwriting 1. Know research-based principles for teaching letter naming and letter formation, both manuscript and cursive. 2. Know techniques for teaching handwriting fluency.	Handwriting 1. Use multisensory techniques to teach letter naming and letter formation in manuscript and cursive forms (Level 1). 2. Implement strategies to build fluency in letter formation, and copying and transcription of written language (Level 1).
Spelling 1. Recognize and explain the relationship between transcription skills and written expression. 2. Identify students' levels of spelling development and orthographic knowledge. 3. Recognize and explain the influences of phonological, orthographic, and morphemic knowledge on spelling.	Spelling 1. Explicitly and effectively teach (e.g., information taught is correct, students are attentive, teacher checks for understanding, teacher scaffolds students' learning) concepts related to spelling (e.g., a rule for adding suffixes to base words) (Level 1). 2. Select materials and/or create lessons that address students' skill levels (Level 1). 3. Analyze a student's spelling errors to determine his or her instructional needs (e.g., development of phonological skills versus learning spelling rules versus application of orthographic or morphemic knowledge in spelling) (Level 2).
Written Expression 1. Understand the major components and processes of written expression and how they interact (e.g., basic writing/ transcription skills versus text generation). 2. Know grade and developmental expectations for students' writing in the following areas: mechanics and conventions of writing, composition, revision, and editing processes.	Written Expression 1. Integrate basic skill instruction with composition in writing lessons. 2. a. Select and design activities to teach important components of writing, including mechanics/ conventions of writing, composition, and revision and editing processes. b. Analyze students' writing to determine specific instructional needs. c. Provide specific, constructive feedback to students targeted to students' most critical needs in writing. d. Teach research-based writing strategies such as those for planning, revising, and editing text.

	e. Teach writing (discourse) knowledge, such as the importance of writing for the intended audience, use of formal versus informal language, and various schemas for writing (e.g., reports versus narratives versus arguments).
3. Understand appropriate uses of assistive technology in written expression.	3. Make appropriate written recommendations for the use of assistive technology in writing.

Explanatory Notes

Just as teachers need to understand the component abilities that contribute to reading comprehension, they also need a componential view of written expression. Important component abilities in writing include basic writing (transcription) skills such as handwriting, keyboarding, spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammatical sentence structure; text generation (composition) processes that involve translating ideas into language, such as appropriate word choice, writing clear sentences, and developing an idea across multiple sentences and paragraphs; and planning, revision and editing processes. Effective instruction and intervention in written expression depend on pinpointing an individual student's specific weaknesses in these different component areas of writing, as well as on teachers' abilities to provide explicit, systematic teaching in each area. Teachers must also be able to teach research-based strategies in written expression, such as those involving strategies for planning and revising compositions, and they should understand the utility of multisensory methods in both handwriting and spelling instruction. Assistive technology can be especially helpful for students with writing difficulties. Teachers should recognize the appropriate uses of technology in writing (e.g., spell- checkers can be valuable but do not replace spelling instruction and have limited utility for students whose misspellings are not recognizable). Specialists should have even greater levels of knowledge about technology.

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Level 1

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Level 2

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F. Follow Ethical Standards for the Profession

Ethical Principles for Service Providers, Conference Exhibitors, and Advertisers

These principles are to be used by employees, board members, and branch officers of the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) in deciding whether members, conference exhibitors, conference or workshop presenters, and/or advertisers in IDA publications are serving the best interest of the public. These principles are intended to safeguard and promote the well-being of individuals with dyslexia and related learning difficulties, to promote the dissemination of reliable and helpful information, and to ensure that standards of best practice are upheld by the organization and its activities.

Practitioners, publishers, presenters, exhibitors, advertisers, and any others who provide services to individuals with dyslexia and related difficulties:

1. strive to do no harm and to act in the best interests of those individuals;
2. maintain the public trust by providing accurate information about currently accepted and scientifically supported best practices in the field;
3. avoid misrepresentation of the efficacy of educational or other treatments or the proof for or against those treatments;
4. respect objectivity by reporting assessment and treatment results accurately, honestly, and truthfully;
5. avoid making unfounded claims of any kind regarding the training, experience, credentials, affiliations, and degrees of those providing services;
6. respect the training requirements of established credentialing and accreditation organizations supported by IDA;
7. engage in fair competition;
8. avoid conflicts of interest when possible and acknowledge conflicts of interest when they occur;
9. support just treatment of individuals with dyslexia and related learning difficulties;
10. respect confidentiality of students or clients; and
11. respect the intellectual property of others.

SECTION II: GUIDELINES PERTAINING TO SUPERVISED PRACTICE OF TEACHERS OF STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED READING DISABILITIES OR DYSLEXIA WHO WORK IN SCHOOL, CLINICAL, OR PRIVATE PRACTICE SETTINGS[1]

Training programs for individuals who are learning to work with challenging students often distinguish levels of expertise by the skills and experience of the individual and the amount of supervised practice required for certification. These levels are labeled differently by various programs and are distinguished here by the designation of "Level I" and "Level II."

C. Level I individuals are practitioners with basic knowledge who:
   1. demonstrate proficiency to instruct individuals with a documented reading disability or dyslexia;
   2. implement an appropriate program with fidelity; and
   3. formulate and implement an appropriate lesson plan.
D. Level II individuals are specialists with advanced knowledge who:
   1. may work in private practice settings, clinics, or schools;
   2. demonstrate proficiency in assessment and instruction of students with documented reading disabilities or dyslexia;
   3. implement and adapt research-based programs to meet the needs of individuals.

To attain Level I status, an individual must:
- pass an approved basic knowledge proficiency exam;
- complete a one-to-one practicum with a student or small group of one to three well-matched students who have a documented reading disability. A recognized, certified instructor* provides consistent oversight and observations of instruction delivered to the same student(s) over time, and the practicum continues until expected proficiency is reached.**
- demonstrate (over time) instructional proficiency in all Level 1 areas outlined on IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards, Section I that is responsive to student needs.
- Document significant student progress with formal and informal assessments as a result of the instruction.

To attain Level II status, an individual must:
- Pass an approved advanced knowledge proficiency exam
- Complete a 1:1 practicum with a student or small group of well-matched students (1–3) who have a documented reading disability. A recognized, certified instructor* provides consistent oversight and observations of instruction delivered to the same student(s) over time, and the practicum continues until expected proficiency is reached.**
- Demonstrate (over time) diagnostic instructional proficiency in all Level 1 and 2 areas outlined on IDA Standards document, Section I.
- Provide successful instruction to several individuals with dyslexia who demonstrate varying needs and document significant student progress with formal and informal assessments as a result of the instruction.
- Complete an approved educational assessment of a student with dyslexia and/or language-based reading disability, including student history and comprehensive recommendations.

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[1] **(Tier 3 in an RTI system; students who may be eligible for special education or intensive intervention; students referred for clinical services because of learning difficulties; or students who qualify for dyslexia intervention services where available.)**

*A recognized or certified instructor is an individual who has met all of the requirements of the level they supervise but who has additional content knowledge and experience in implementing and observing instruction for students with dyslexia and other reading difficulties in varied settings. A recognized instructor has been recommended by or certified by an approved trainer mentorship program that meets these standards. The trainer mentorship program has been reviewed by and approved by the IDA Standards and Practices Committee.

**Documentation of proficiency must be 1) completed by a recognized/certified instructor providing oversight in the specified program; 2) completed during full (not partial) lesson observations; and 3) must occur at various intervals throughout the instructional period with student.