Structured Literacy 101

The Why, What, and How to teaching a Structured Literacy Approach

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Background Information

Former classroom teacher- Kindergarten and First Grade

CAS (6th year) in Remedial Reading and Reading Consultancy

A/OGA and C-SLDI

Private Practice in Waitsfield, Vermont servicing students PreK-12

Adjunct Professor at Norwich University

Presentation Overview

- Why teach using a Structured Literacy approach?
  - Overview of the research behind how our brains learn to read- the Science of Reading
- What are the components to a Structured Literacy approach?
- How do you implement this approach in your classroom?
  - Actionalable activities to use in your classroom will be presented and discussed.

Why Should We be Talking about SoR and Structured Literacy?

Why should we be thinking about changing literacy practices?

- What are our current national reading scores?

Won't there always be students who struggle to learn to read?

- Not if given the correct instruction!

The Science of Reading Movement is trying to bring the science behind learning to read to the classroom- special education and regular education.
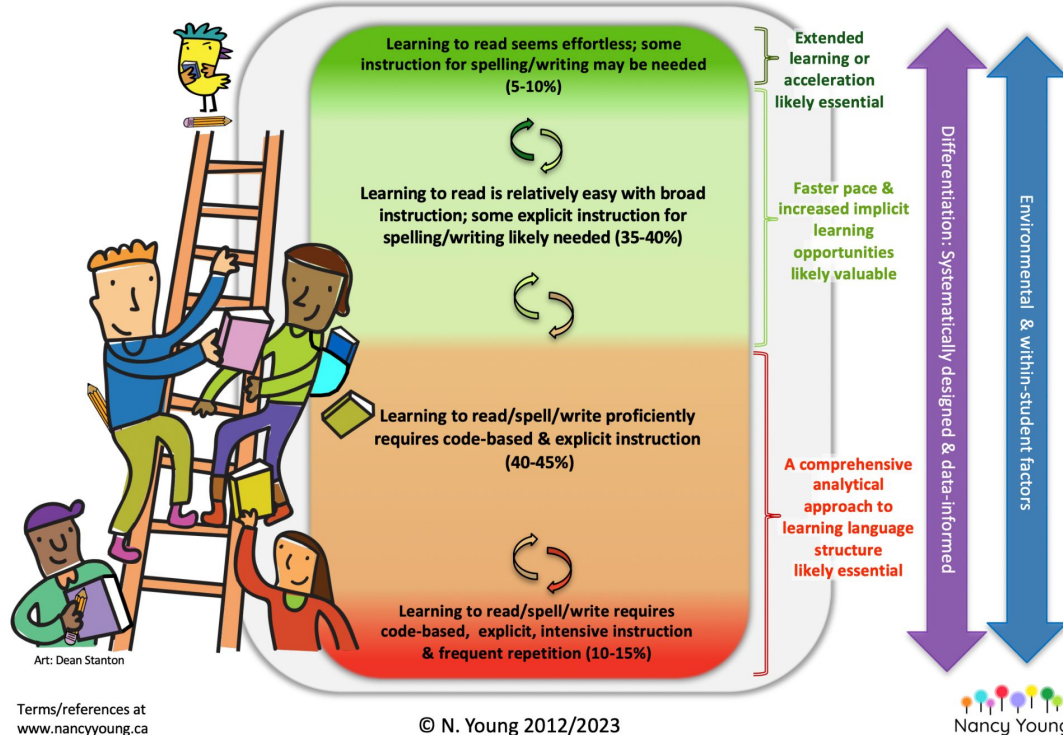
The Structured Literacy Approach has long been in practice for students with dyslexia. Students with dyslexia NEED this approach to be successful readers but it benefits all learners.

Current State of Literacy in America

NAEP Reading: National Achievement Level Results

Thirty-three percent of fourth-graders at or above *NAEP Proficient* in reading in 2022, lower compared to 2019

The Ladder of Reading & Writing

Learning to read seems effortless; some instruction for spelling/writing may be needed (5-10%)

Learning to read is relatively easy with broad instruction; some explicit instruction for spelling/writing likely needed (35-40%)

Learning to read/spell/write proficiently requires code-based & explicit instruction (40-45%)

Learning to read/spell/write requires code-based, explicit, intensive instruction & frequent repetition (10-15%)

Extended learning or acceleration likely essential

Faster pace & increased implicit learning opportunities likely valuable

A comprehensive analytical approach to learning language structure likely essential

Differentiation: Systematically designed & data-informed

Environmental & within-student factors

Art: Dean Stanton

Terms/references at www.nancyyoung.ca

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Questions?

IDA Structured Literacy Infographic

What is the Reading Brain?

The Why to Structured Literacy

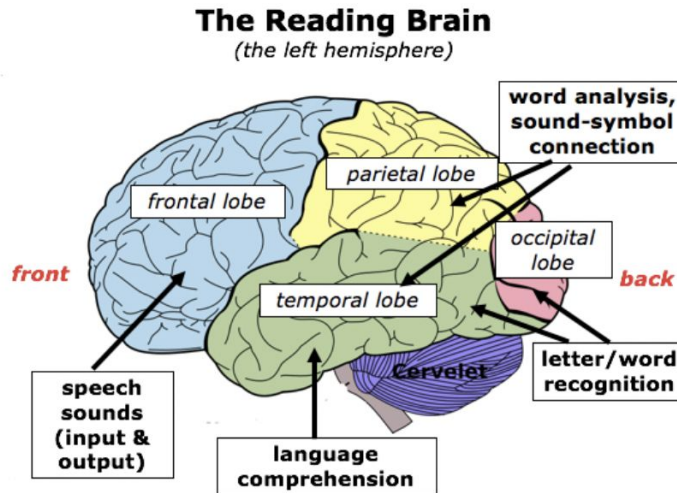Our brains are not wired to read.

Our brains are wired to speak.

For students to become proficient readers there needs to be connections built between the area of the brain that processes sound, the area of the brain that processes language comprehension, and the area of the brain that processes and remembers visual information.

Our brains remember objects and faces, they do not remember whole words.

Areas in the Brain Involved in Reading

How the Brain Learns to Read - Keys to Literacy

The Reading Brain
(the left hemisphere)

word analysis, sound-symbol connection

parietal lobe

frontal lobe

occipital lobe

front

back

temporal lobe

cervelet

speech sounds (input & output)

letter/word recognition

language comprehension

Words are Processed in the Brain…

By sound in the phonological processor- Bat- /b/ /a/ /t/

By meaning in the language comprehension area

By vision *bat* but not in a whole word "picture" but as mapping those letters with the sounds

*Sound and meaning are both parts of spoken language- what we are wired for.

Orthographic Mapping

Students needs to break words down by sound and then learn the letters that match or represent those sounds. This needs to be done repeatedly for then the word to be mapped in the brain for instant retrieval. Some students needs more repetitions than others.

Orthographic mapping (OM) involves the formation of letter-sound connections to bond the spellings, pronunciations, and meanings of specific words in memory. It explains how children learn to read words by sight, to spell words from memory, and to acquire vocabulary words from print.- Reading Rockets

What Orthographic Mapping looks like in the Brain

Advancing Science of Reading in the Early Years

Cortex in the Classroom

Carolyn Strom

Goal State (Skilled Reader)
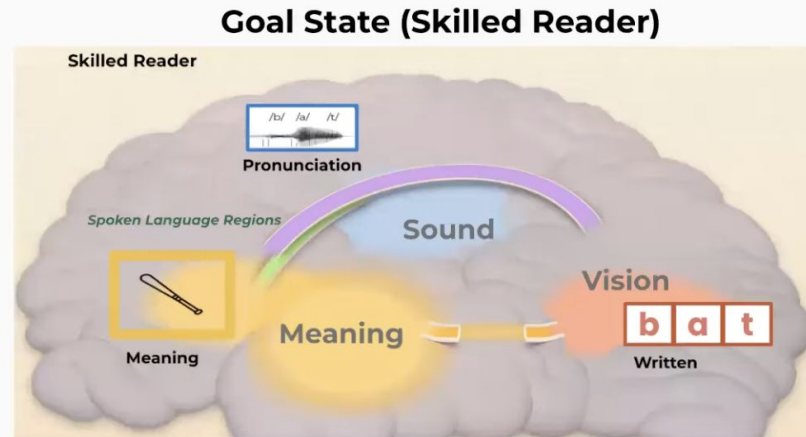
What Orthographic Mapping Utilizes and What it Does Not

The basis of OM is attaching sounds to letters (alphabetic principle) but building phonemic awareness is also a major component to then make words automatically recognized in the brain.

It is not whole word memorization with flash cards like how most sight word instruction has been implemented

It is not teaching kids to look at the first letter of the word and then look for something in the picture that starts with that letter.

Both of these balanced literacy teaching strategies activate just the visual section of the brain which is what students with dyslexia rely on.

*Specific techniques will be presented later in the session.

Questions?

The What of Structured Literacy

It is connected to Scarborough's Reading Rope. Hollis Scarborough's research demonstrated that for children to become proficient readers, they need to be automatic in word recognition and in language comprehension.

Arizona Department Of Education

The What of Structured Literacy- What do I teach?

Word Recognition-Handwriting-Spelling

Phonemes-Graphemes

Morphemes

Syllable and Stress Patterns

Orthographic Conventions

Comprehension-Composition

Vocabulary-Background Knowledge

Sentence Structure-Grammar

Text Structure

Critical Thinking

Terms Explained

Phoneme: smallest unit of sound in a word

- Cat has three phonemes: /c/ /a/ /t/
- Ship also has three phonemes /sh/ /i/ /p/

Grapheme: written symbols of how we represent sounds

Morpheme: smallest unit of meaning in a word

- Cats = two morphemes cat and s
- Suffix s carries meaning: plural

Syllable Types and Orthographic Conventions

Syllable types and syllable division are be explicitly taught

- Closed, open, vowel-consonant-e, vowel team , r-controlled, consonant- le

Stress patterns and schwa are also explained and practiced

Orthographic Conventions or Spelling Patterns

- /k/ is spelled as ck directly after a short vowel sound

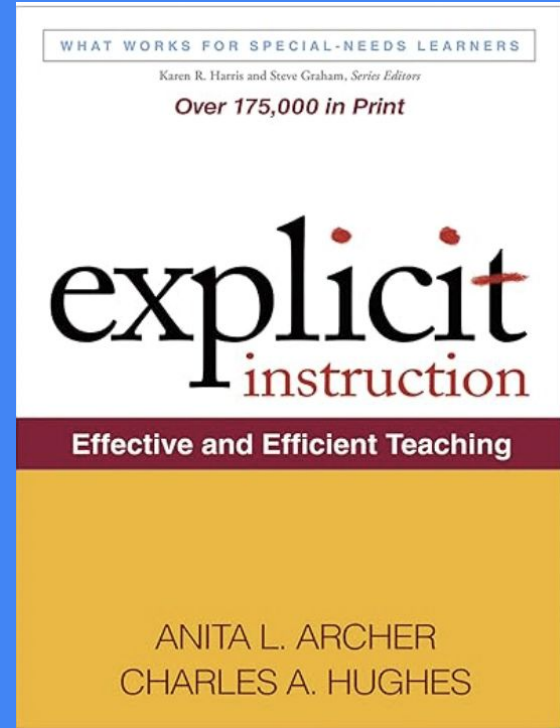# The How: How Content is Taught for Reading and Writing

Direct and Systematic

- Explicit
- Sequential
- Cumulative
- Multimodal

Mastery Oriented

- Data Driven
- Targeted Prompt Feedback
- Highly Interactive
- Scaffolded

Explicit Teaching

Direct Explanations and modeling- nothing is left to chance

Explicit Instruction

When reviewing Anita Archer's work, explicit instruction encompassess many of the attributes listed under *Mastery Oriented*

- Targeted Prompt Feedback
- Highly Interactive
  - Many ways to engaged students besides hand-raising
    - Movement response
    - White boards
    - Turn and talks (With explicit routines)
- Scaffolded with a lot of opportunities for intentional, deliberate practice of skills
  - I do, We do, You do

Sequential

A sequential or systemic approach to teaching, starts with basic, common skills and moves in a logical sequence to more complex and less frequently used skills

Alphabetic Principle

Beginning Phonics

- Vc, cvc words, consonant digraphs, double consonant endings, blends, 2-syllable words with short vowels

Advanced Phonics

- Long vowel spelling patterns, r-controlled vowels, schwa etc.

The How

Cumulative

- Circling back to previous taught skills

Multi-modal

- Using multiple sensory pathways while learning
- Does NOT have to multi-sensory in the sense that students are writing letters in sand or shaving cream (Although you can!)
  - Saying the letter sounds (phonemes) as they write a word

*[Macro and Micro Levels of Multi-sensory Instruction](#)

Data-Driven

Progress monitoring to ensure students are receiving the skills they need. Tier 1 should be highly differentiated.

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Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Recent research has shown that the skills do not necessarily have to be taught on a continuum to ensure success. Kids can be exposed to blending and segmenting phonemes even if they are not successful at the syllable level yet.

- Susan Brady has done research and has webinars on this topic
- [Keys To Literacy Article](#)

Phonemic Awareness and Letters?

There has been a recent debate in the reading world about the benefit of advanced phonemic awareness (substitution and deletion) and the benefits of including letters when doing PA activities.

Here are my big takeaways from my PA journey:

Young students who are still learning letters and their sounds should be exposed to PA activities without letters to build their overall sound awareness

- Rhyming, alliteration, counting syllables, segmenting and blending phonemes with and without manipulatives, reading stories that highlight word play

Once students have an Alphabetic Principle Foundation…

Include letters in PA practice and instruction

Word Chains are a great way to do this that is quick and effective that can include a lot of the levels on the PAST (Kilpatrick)

Cat, bat, bit, bid, sid, slid

Can use block letters or magnetic letters. Words an also be written in grapheme boxes

Vocabulary work is embedded and nonsense words can be included

[Dyslexic Logic](#)

Word Chains

Research has shown the two most effective phonemic awareness tasks are blending and segmenting.

Implement these often orally with children who are still learning the alphabetic principle

- Turtle and cheetah talk

Once student know most of their letter/sound correspondences- word chains is one powerful way to include letters in your PA instruction and practice

Morpheme Chains

Word chaining can be adapted to morphemes for older students.

Once a number of prefixes, suffixes and base words have been introduced

Tract, distract, distracting, distracted, attracted

Decodable Texts vs. Predictable texts

- Align with the phonics skills the student is currently learning
- Any non-phonetic words should already be known to the child
- Any word in the text, the child should have the knowledge to how to decode it if it is not automatically known
  - If a child is working on CVC words and knows the digraph sh but ch has not been explicitly taught, ch words should not be in the text
  - There should be no need to have to guess at any words

Decodable Texts

The argument against decodable texts is that they are boring and is not "real reading"

- That is true if you are a skilled reader
- The end goal of reading is not to be reading decodable texts forever
- They are in a way like training wheels to help get kids to be reading more complex texts that allows for comprehension work

Also, just giving kids any decodable to read is not good practice either

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A dog got on the pig on a log.

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Comprehension Instruction Does Not Start After Kids are Reading

Begin as Interactive Read Alouds with Think Alouds

Text Structures should be explicitly taught

- Description
- Cause and Effect
- Compare and Contrast
- Sequence
- Problem Solution

Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

In 2022 released a practice guide for evidence-based recommendations for grades 4-9.

In terms of comprehension, they recommended the following evidence-based principles:

- Building students' world and word knowledge
- Consistently provide opportunities for students to ask and answer questions about the text
- Teach students a routine for determining the gist, or main idea, of a short section of text
- Teach students how to monitor for comprehension as they read

IES Practice Guide

Also, a lot of recent research has come out about the importance of teaching students how to make inferences while reading

Amy Elleman- Examining the Impact of Inference Instruction on the Literal and Inferential Comprehension of Skilled and Less Skilled Readers: A Meta-Analytic Review

The Journey to and on SoR and Structured Literacy is Long and Complex

Take a minute to reflect what you have heard tonight. Where do you think you are on this journey?

Where do you think the district is on this journey toward a more structured approach to teaching reading and writing?