

The Elephant in the Room: What We Overlook Regarding Struggling Readers

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“Every child would read if it were in his power to do so”

(Betts, 1936, p.5).

Source: Betts, E. A. (1936). *The prevention and correction of reading difficulties*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson and Company.

We have too many different diagnostic terms

- Dyslexia
- Specific Reading Disability
- Specific Learning Disability in Basic Reading Skills
- Specific Reading Fluency/Rate Disability
- Specific reading disorder (ICD-10- F81.00)
- Specific learning disorder with an impairment in reading (DSM-5 315.00)

2013 DSM-5 diagnostic subtype of Specific Learning Disorder:

1. Specific learning disorder with impairment in reading includes possible deficits in:

Word reading accuracy

Reading rate or fluency

Reading comprehension

DSM-5 diagnostic code 315.00.

Note: *Dyslexia* is an alternative term used to refer to a pattern of learning difficulties characterized by problems with accurate or fluent word recognition, poor decoding and poor spelling abilities.

“We do not understand why the term “dyslexia” is often viewed as if it were a four-letter word, not to be uttered in polite company” (p. 187).

Siegel, L. S., & Mazabel, S. (2013). Basic cognitive processes and reading disabilities. In H. L. Swanson, K. R. Harris, & S. Graham (Eds.), *Handbook of learning disabilities* (2nd ed.) (pp. 186-213). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Labels

“...without a label we have no way of talking about a problem.”

Source: Johns, B. H., & Kauffman, J. M. (2009). Caution: Response to intervention (RtI). *Learning Disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 15, 157-160.

As of December, 2015, 28 states had some type of dyslexia law. It is now 33.

Youman, M., & Mather, N. (2016). Dyslexia laws in the USA: An Update. *Perspectives*, 41(4), 10-18. see: dyslexia.com

Solution:

If we use alternate terms, add in “also referred to as dyslexia.”

A Major Problem: Inappropriate Reading Material

- scarcity of high interest books with simple reading vocabulary
- provision of reading books for only one grade level for each grade
- inflexible programs so that teachers cannot adjust the difficulty of the texts to the achievement level of the students

Source: Monroe, M., & Backus, B. (1937). *Remedial reading*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Lessons from History

- Oral language and reasoning abilities are often more advanced than basic reading skills.
- Early intervention is critical.
- Reading problems can affect an individual of any level of intelligence.
- Both assessments and instruction must be planned, adapted for each individual, systematic, and intensive.

Lessons from History (cont')

- One-to-one or small group instruction is effective.
- Many students require systematic phonics instruction.
- The teacher must receive adequate training and supervision in the implementation of methodologies.
- Reading problems affect emotional well-being.

Solution:

Let's pay more attention to our history:

Everything has been said before, but since nobody listens we have to keep going back and beginning all over again. -Andre Gide

Poor Phonological Processing

May have:

1. Early articulation errors

2. Confusion of similar sounds (e.g., /b/,/p/ and /f/, /v/)
3. History of ear infections
4. Trouble learning letter sounds
5. Poor nonword repetition, reading, and spelling

The phonological deficit view that has dominated the field for years is inadequate for explaining all cases of reading disorder (Peterson & Pennington, 2012; Snowling & Hulme, 2012) and its importance has been overstated (Swanson, Trainin, Necochea, & Hammill, 2003).

Peterson, R. L., & Pennington, B. F. (2012). Developmental dyslexia. *The Lancet*, 379(9830), 1997–2007.

Snowling, M. J., & Hulme, C. (2012). Annual research review: The nature and classification of reading disorders—a commentary for proposals on DSM-5. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 53, 593–607.

Swanson, H. L., Trainin, G., Necochea, D. M., & Hammill, D. D. (2003). Rapid naming, phonological awareness, and reading. A meta analysis of the correlational evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 73, 407–444.

Other Factors Besides Phonological Awareness Can Contribute to Reading Problems

- Attention
- Orthography (recall of spelling patterns) and the speed of word perception
- Rapid automatized naming (RAN) (quick naming of colors, objects, letters, digits)
- Perceptual or processing speed (visual scanning speed)
- Working memory (recalling and rearranging stimuli)

Correlates of dyslexia

“Perhaps the most significant contribution of this body of work for practitioners at the current time ... is to demonstrate the need for caution against too great an adherence to an overly simplistic phonological model” (p. 81).

A greater emphasis is needed on the role of underlying auditory, visual and attentional factors.

Source: Elliott, J. G., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2014). *The dyslexia debate*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Three Factors to Consider

- Attention
- Orthography (recall of spelling patterns) and the speed of word perception
- Rapid automatized naming (RAN) (quick naming of colors, objects, letters, digits)

ADHD/RD

- 25 to 40% of individuals with ADHD also meet the criteria for RD [e.g., August and Garfinkel, 1990; Semrud-Clikeman et al., 1992]

- 15–35% of individuals with RD also meet the criteria for ADHD [Gilger et al., 1992; Shaywitz et al., 1995; Willcutt & Pennington, 2000].

Source: Willcutt, E. G., Pennington, B. F., & DeFries, J. C. (2000). Twin study of the etiology of comorbidity between reading disability and Attention-Deficit/ Hyperactivity Disorder. *American Journal of Medical Genetics (Neuropsychiatric Genetics)*, 96, 293–301.

How do you know the correct spelling?

- rain rane
- soap sope

Phonological processing can occur but it is not sufficient for identifying the correct spelling of the word.

“It was as if he were driving in a NASCAR race in first gear while everyone else was cruising along in fifth gear”

(Lindstedt & Zaccariello, 2008) (pp.195-196).

Source: Lindstedt, K., & Zaccariello, M. J. (2008). A tale of two assessments: Reading Fluency. In J. N. Apps, R. F. Newby, & L. W. Roberts (Ed.), *Pediatric neuropsychology case studies: From the exceptional to the commonplace* (pp. 191-199). New York, NY: Springer.

What is Rapid Automated Naming (RAN)?

Measures response time or rapid retrieval for a visual stimulus (objects, colors, letters, or numbers or a combination)

What Do Rapid Naming Tests Appear to Measure?

1. Ability to sustain attention to process and name the symbols.
2. Ability to name and discriminate among the symbols.
3. Ability to retrieve verbal labels rapidly.
4. Ability to articulate words rapidly.

What Do We Know about Rapid Naming?

1. Appears to be distinct from phonology.
2. Predicts word-reading accuracy and speed in many languages.
3. Predicts irregular word reading better than non-word reading.
4. Predicts poor reading across the lifespan.

Dr. Martha Denckla Visual-Verbal Highway

See it...Say it

Slow Word Perception

Health Council of the Netherlands. Dyslexia. Definition and treatment. The Hague: Health Council of the Netherlands, 1995.

Dyslexia is present when the automatization of word identification (reading) and/or word spelling does not develop or does so very incompletely or with great difficulty. The term 'automatization' refers to the establishment of an automatic process. A process of this kind is characterized by a high level of speed and accuracy. It is carried out unconsciously, makes minimal demands on attention and is difficult to suppress, ignore or influence. The working definition used means that dyslexia is characterized in practice by a severe retardation in reading and spelling which is persistent and resists the usual teaching methods and remedial efforts. Upon examination, it will be accompanied by very slow and/or inaccurate and easily disturbed word identification and/or word spelling.

Solution: Reading Evaluations

Include more than just phonological awareness. Consider and assess other cognitive abilities, such as:

- orthographic awareness
- RAN
- processing speed
- working memory

Three Procedures that can Contribute Information for SLD Identification in the US (IDEA, 2004)

- Ability-achievement discrepancy
- Response to intervention (RTI)
- Alternative research-based methods (e.g., a pattern of strengths and weaknesses- PSW approach)

“The problems in using a formula to identify students who have learning disabilities are many, serious, and too often disregarded” (p.32).

Source: Bateman, B. (1992). Learning disabilities: The changing landscape. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 25, 29-36.

Response to research–based intervention can be used as PART of the evaluation procedures.

What Response to Intervention (RTI) Can Do

- Monitor the progress of all students in the school.
- Reduce the number of referrals to special education.
- Provide adequate, timely interventions to all students.

RTI

Responsiveness to Intervention

Inadequate Response to Intervention

Limited Response to Intervention

When provided with good instruction aimed at their needs, children with SLD do learn...

RTI does not tell us WHY a student does not RTI. RTI doesn't classify, individualize, or diagnose.

“Knowledgeable practitioners also use clinical judgment to determine which approach is applicable for a given child or in a given school setting.

While regulations and policies require school districts to implement a single approach, best practice may reside somewhere in the margins with a hybrid model” (p. 6).

Source: Kovalski, J. F., Lichtenstein, R., Naglieri, J., Ortiz, S. O., Klotz, M. B., & Rossen, E. (2015). Current perspectives in the identification of specific learning disabilities. *Communique*, 44(4), 4, 6.

Solutions

- Don't let an RTI process delay comprehensive evaluations.
- Recognize that all “methods” of SLD identification have both positive and negative aspects and if used without clinical judgment, will not result in valid placement decisions.

“Accuracy is FIRST, FOREMOST, and FOREVER the FOUNDATION of FLUENCY.”

Source: Hasbrouck, J., & Glaser, D. (2011). *Fluency: Understanding and teaching this complex skill: Training manual*. Wellesley Hills, MA: Gibson, Hasbrouck & Associates.

“...there has been a too frequent, unexamined acceptance of untested practices, which may not represent the smartest way of implementing multilevel prevention.

Examples of this uncritical acceptance include the very quick and broad adoption of one-stage screening procedures...”(p. 275).

Source: Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., & Compton, D. (2012). Smart RTI: A next-generation approach to multilevel prevention. *Exceptional Children*, 78, 263-279.

“One-stage screens in the early grades result in unacceptably high rates of false positives.

A two-stage screen that included rapid naming, phonological processing, oral language comprehension, nonverbal reasoning, untimed and timed word identification and word attack skills, greatly improved classification accuracy.”

Source: Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., & Compton, D. (2012). Smart RTI: A next-generation approach to multilevel prevention. *Exceptional Children*, 78, 263-279.

“We recommend that schools practice Smart RTI by conducting multistage screening within primary prevention to avoid providing secondary prevention to students whose failure to respond to it can be predicted.

These students should be fast tracked to tertiary prevention” (p. 269).

Source: Fuchs, D., Fuchs, L. S., & Compton, D. (2012). Smart RTI: A next-generation approach to multilevel prevention. *Exceptional Children*, 78, 263-279.

Solution: Two-Stage Screen

- TOSWRF-2: Group administered; takes less than 5 minutes; timed; place slashes through connected words that increase in difficulty.
- TOWRE-2: Individually administered: takes two minutes; timed: 45 seconds reading real words and then 45 seconds reading nonsense words.
- Both published by PRO-ED.
- Students who do poorly on both, need a more comprehensive evaluation.

“To be effective, remedial instruction in reading must be preceded by careful diagnosis.”

Source: Stanger, M. A., & Donohue, E. K. (1937). *Prediction and prevention of reading difficulties*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Dr. Alan Kaufman

... there is a demand for the comprehensive assessment to drive intervention. This is the way it has always been, and this is the way it will always be because the referral questions for children with SLD have always asked, What is wrong? And how can we help? These questions demand differential diagnosis, a large part of which is determined by the cognitive abilities present in the individual child (p. 211).

Source: Kaufman, A. S., Lichtenberger, E. O., Fletcher-Janzen, E., & Kaufman, N. L. (2005). *Essentials of the K-ABC-II Assessment*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

A diagnosis identifies the nature of a specific learning disability and has implications for its probable etiology, instructional requirements, and prognosis.

Ironically, in an era when educational practitioners are encouraged to use evidence-based instructional practices, they are not encouraged to use evidence-based differential diagnoses of specific learning disabilities. Dr. Virginia Berninger (2010)

Solution: Comprehensive Evaluation

Ensure that students who struggle with reading get a comprehensive evaluation that explains:

- the reasons a student is struggling with reading and how we can help

- where the student is developmentally (e.g., needs phonological awareness instruction, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension)

“The children of superior mental capacity who fail to learn to read are, of course, spectacular examples of specific reading difficulty since they have such obvious abilities in other fields.” (p. 23)

Source: Monroe, M. (1932). *Children who cannot read*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

“Individuals identified as intellectually gifted may also have LD.

Although twice- exceptional individuals may appear to be functioning adequately in the classroom, their performance may be far below what they are capable of, given their intellectual ability...educators often overlook these students until late in their academic careers” (p. 238).

Source: Learning disabilities: Implications for policy regarding research and practice: A report by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities March 2011. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 34, 237-241.

“Moreover, the notion that a student cannot have a reading or learning disability if he or she manages to attain high or passing grades is fundamentally wrong.

It reflects an outmoded and inaccurate understanding of individuals with disabilities as individuals who are completely incapable of performing well.”

Source: Testimony of Jo Anne Simon, Esq. Before the United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions July 15, 2008

Solution: Recognize that students can have reading scores in the average range and still have a reading problem.

One has to consider:

- Level of intelligence
- Educational history
- Educational opportunities
- How the student functions on a daily basis

“Many teachers are being trained to teach reading without themselves ever having learned how an alphabetic orthography represents the language, why it is important for beginners to understand how the internal phonological structure of words relates to orthography, or why it is hard for children to achieve this understanding” (p. 23).

Source: Liberman, I. Y., Shankweiler, D., & Liberman, A. M. (1992). The alphabetic principle and learning to read. In D. Shankweiler & I. Y. Liberman (Eds.). *Phonology and reading disability: Solving the reading puzzle* (pp. 1-33). Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

“...lower level language mastery is as essential for the literacy teacher as anatomy is for the physician.” (Moats, 1994, p. 99)

Better Prepared Teachers Lessen the Impact of Reading Difficulties

“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,” said Dr. Louisa Moats, Chair of IDA’s Standards and Practices Committee. “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 they require to reach their potential.”

“In the final analysis, reading difficulties can be prevented to the degree that the teacher has a professional understanding of her work” (p. 245).

Source: Betts, E. A. (1936). *The prevention and correction of reading difficulties*. Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson and Company.

Solution: We need to make sure we have well-trained teachers and that they have time to teach reading...

Knowing what is needed to help students is not the same thing as being able to provide it.

Kauffman, J. M., Lloyd, J. W., Baker, J., & Riedel, T. M. (1995). Inclusion of all students with emotional or behavioral disorders? Let’s think again. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 542-546.

“The students of greatest concern to us were those who were very poor readers at the start of the school year and as a group made no progress, despite being part of responsible inclusion program that received substantial support.

We must conclude that full-time placement in the general education classroom with in-class support from special education teachers is not sufficient to meet the needs of these students. They require combined services that include in-class support and daily intensive, one-to-one instruction from highly trained personnel. This is an expensive proposition but appears to be the only solution that will yield growth in reading for students with severe reading disabilities” (p.159).

Source: Klingner, J. K., Vaughn, S., Hughes, M. T., Schumm, J. S., & Elbaum, B. (1998). Outcomes for students with and without learning disabilities in inclusive classrooms. *Learning Disabilities Research and Practice*, 13, 153–161.

They need methods that provide...

- Structure
- explicit teaching
- feedback
- repetition
- practice

“In all remedial work, the teacher should start first with the child and then find the appropriate method.

Fit the method to the child, not the child to the method.”

Monroe, M. (1935). Diagnosis of reading disabilities. In G. M. Whipple (Ed.), *The thirty-fourth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education: Educational diagnosis* (p. 227). Bloomington, IL: Public School Publishing.

“About one-third of the children in the longitudinal study were receiving special help, but this help was often very erratic, occurring sporadically and consisting of what might best be described as a Band-aid approach to a gushing wound” (pp. 34-35).

Source: Shaywitz, S. (2003). *Overcoming dyslexia: A new and complete science-based program for reading problems at any level*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

“Students with learning disabilities are not receiving special education, which is based on the core principles of intensive, relentless, structured, appropriately paced instruction in small groups with frequent monitoring of each student’s progress.

We believe that the diminution of special education for students with learning disabilities has occurred because of the well-meaning, but misinformed, overly zealous adoption of inclusive educational practices” (p.3).

Hallahan, D. P., & Cohen, S. B. (2008). Many students with learning disabilities are not receiving *special education*. *Learning disabilities: A Multidisciplinary Journal*, 15, 3-9.

A little over a decade ago, Foorman and Torgesen (2001) claimed that if current research findings on effective classroom reading instruction were implemented, meeting the additional needs of the at-risk child for effective, intensive, and explicit individual or small group instruction, the literacy needs of all children could be met.

This is the case where advances in the science of reading disorders and intervention research, if brought to the front line of educational practice, could change the life circumstances of millions of at-risk children and adolescents” (p. 351).

Source: Lovett, M. W., Barron, R. W., & Frijters, J. C. (2013). Word identification difficulties in children and adolescents with reading disabilities. In H. L. Swanson, K. R. Harris, & S. Graham (Eds.), *Handbook of learning disabilities* (2nd ed.) (pp. 169-185). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Solution: Make sure that all students who struggle with reading are receiving systematic, intensive reading instruction

MindPlay Virtual Reading Coach

(Internet-based)

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency

- Vocabulary
 - Comprehension
 - and Grammar & Meaning
- www.mindplay.com

LANGUAGE! Live is a comprehensive English Language Arts curriculum for struggling adolescent readers and writers.

It blends engaging online instruction with targeted teacher- directed instruction to help learners close the reading and writing gap.

Word Training: Online Instruction

Leverages the power of technology to solidify foundational literacy skills in a private and personal learning environment. Consonants and Vowels

Fluency Morphology

Greek and Latin Roots

Encoding and Decoding

Grades 5-12

[Language Live Website](#)

Read, Write & Type

Talking Fingers Website

Ages 6-9

[Talking Fingers Website](#)

[Read Write & Type Website](#)

Inequality in School Programs

- Public versus private schools
- High SES vs. low SES schools
- Quality of teacher training and education
- Available educational materials and resources

IRREDUCIBLE FACTS FOR TEACHING

1. Differences in learning rate exist.

Instructional procedures that treat students as equal are bound to be ineffective for either the upper or lower ranges or both.

2. Span of student ability

3. Average third-grade class will have a six-grade spread of ability.

Source: Ladas, H.S. (1960). A handbook of irreducible facts for teaching and learning. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 606-607.

Many students do not have the ability to keep pace with the curriculum the way it is structured within the general education classroom and thus may experience a different kind of segregation—the exclusion from the basic right to learn.

Source: Schumm, J.S. et al. (1995). General education teacher planning: What can students with learning disabilities expect? *Exceptional Children*, 61, 335-352.

Meeting the needs of students across the spectrum of academic ability...

requires acceptance of diversity... To use one yardstick to measure student growth, one set of standards to drive what is taught, and one view of academic success is indefensible” (p. 22).

Moats, L. (2015). Many children left behind? The common core and students with reading difficulties. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, 41(2), 19-23.

“Certainly the most optimistic and well-meaning, but absurd, criterion is for all children to be at least at ‘grade level’”... by NCLB law (p. 50).

Source: Olson, R.K., Keenan, J. M., Byrne, B., & Samuelsson, S. (2014). Why do children differ in their development of reading and related skills. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 18, 38-54.

“... the standards state that students are to be fluent readers by the end of second grade, and that all students are to read text at grade level and above. Is this lofty expectation consistent with reality?” (p. 20)

Moats, L. (2015). Many children left behind? The common core and students with reading difficulties. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, 41(2), 19-23.

“Although it seems contrary to American ideals, “all students” will never be at grade-level or above in reading, any more than all students will be accomplished musicians, athletes, graphic artists, physicists, or poets” (p. 20).

Moats, L. (2015). Many children left behind? The common core and students with reading difficulties. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, 41(2), 19-23.

“A President, a secretary of education, or a legislative body may well declare that ‘no child will be left behind,’ but that does not change the fact that testing (or any other measurement required for accountability) will always produce a distribution, including a bottom – even a bottom quartile, even a bottom tenth, even an individual or a group that scores lowest. It happens every single time, no exceptions!” (p. 521)

Kauffman, J. M. (2005). Waving to Ray Charles: Missing the meaning of disabilities. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86, 520- 521, 524.

Solution

Teach our children how to read; do not retain them.

Design of study in which intervention occurred

1. Most “at risk” first graders from five elementary school - PPVT above 70

2. Instruction provided in 45 min. sessions every day from October through May in groups of 3 or 5 by experienced teachers or well- trained paraprofessionals
3. Used a structured (scripted) reading program that contained instruction and practice in phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, and comprehension
4. Used a number of methods to achieve fidelity of implementation: 3 days of initial training, weekly supervisory visits, and monthly inservices (3 hours)

Source: Torgesen, J. K. (2004, January). Setting new goals for reading interventions: Evidence from research. Keynote presentation at the Northern California Branch of the International Dyslexia Association, San Francisco.

Growth in Word Reading Ability [GRAPH]

Growth in Correct Words Per Minute on First Grade Level Passages for four lowest performers [GRAPH]

“The remedial work was unsuccessful in about 4 or 5 percent of the cases, in that this percentage of cases did not show improved scores on the retests” (p. 151).

Source: Monroe, M., & Backus, B. (1937). *Remedial reading*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

“We firmly believe that it does students with LD little good to be included and socialized in general education classrooms for 12 years if the result is that these students leave high-school reading at a second- or third-grade level and with serious self esteem issues” (p. 66).

Source: Herr, C. M., & Bateman, B. D.. (2013). Learning disabilities and the law. In H. L. Swanson, K.R. Harris, & S. Graham (Eds.), *Handbook of learning disabilities* (2nd ed.) (pp. 51-68). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

“Slow reading acquisition has cognitive, behavioral, and motivational consequences that slow the development of other cognitive skills and inhibit performance on many academic tasks.

In short, as reading develops, other cognitive processes linked to it track the level of reading skill. Knowledge bases that are in reciprocal relationships with reading are also inhibited from further development. The longer this developmental sequence is allowed to continue, the more generalized the deficits will become, seeping into more and more areas of cognition and behavior. Or to put it more simply and sadly—in the words of a tearful 9-year-old, already failing frustratingly behind his peers in reading progress, ‘Reading affects everything you do’ ” (p. 390).

Source: Stanovich, K. E. (1986). Matthew effects in reading: Some consequences of individual differences in the acquisition of literacy. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 21, 360-407.

“Failure to learn to read as others do is a major catastrophe in a child’s life” (p.1).

Source: Dolch, E. W. (1939). *A manual for remedial reading*. Champaign, IL: Garrard Press.

In discussing his own realization that he had dyslexia, Schultz (2011), a Pulitzer prize

winning poet, reflected: “My ignorance of my dyslexia only intensified my sense of isolation and hopelessness. Ignorance is perhaps the most painful aspect of a learning disability” (p. 64).

Schultz, P. (2011). *My dyslexia*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company.

Solutions

- Make sure that all students have positive school experiences.
- Ensure that all teachers understand the impact of slow reading development on self esteem.
- Help students become self advocates so they can explain to teachers what they need to be successful.

Students with disabilities and English-learners posed the greatest challenges:

Only four in 10 of the teachers who have had more than five days of professional development in the common core felt prepared to teach the standards to such students. Fewer than 14 percent of those with less than a day of training said they felt ready.

“Increasing the rigor of K-12 expectations is likely to present increased challenges for students with LD and their teachers” (p. 6).

Haager, D., & Vaughn, S. (2013). The common core state standards and reading: Interpretations and implications for elementary students with learning disabilities. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice, 28*, 5-16.

“The standard for fluent reading in the CCSS reflects an ideal but unrealistic aspiration, and thus is an unfair benchmark by which to determine the academic fate of students or the quality of schools and teachers” (p.21).

Moats, L. (2015). Many children left behind? The common core and students with reading difficulties. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy, 41*(2), 19-23.

The Elephants in the Room

- We have too many different diagnostic terms.
- We pay attention to our past.
- The only cause of poor reading is phonological awareness.
- The procedures for SLD identification make a lot of sense.
- RTI results can diagnose reading problems.
- CBM measures alone are sufficient for identifying reading difficulties.
- Students who struggle with reading don't need comprehensive evaluations.
- Gifted students who struggle with reading don't exist.

The Elephants in the Room

- Teachers are adequately prepared to teach reading.

- The best setting for students with poor reading is the general education classroom.
- Students who struggle with reading are receiving systematic, intensive reading instruction.
- Schools and teachers have embraced the use of technology for teaching reading.
- We address equity in school resources.

The Elephants in the Room

- Individual differences are acknowledged and respected.
- Instruction is adapted for struggling readers.
- All children will be reading at grade level by 2014. Reading problems only affect academic performance.
- All teachers understand reading and spelling problems.
- Teachers feel prepared to teach standards. We are allowing kids to be kids.

“Failure in reading is likely to lead to a general sense of inferiority that will cripple the individual’s whole life.

One of the greatest compensations in remedial reading work is to see the transformation in a child when you have shown him, in spite of his conviction, that he can read” (p. 3).

Source: Dolch, E. W. (1939). *A manual for remedial reading*. Champaign, IL: Garrard Press.

“At one magical instant in your early childhood, the page of a book -that string of confused, alien ciphers-shivered into meaning. Words spoke to you, gave up their secrets; at that moment, whole universes opened. You became, irrevocably, a reader.”

Alberto Manguel, *A History of reading*, 1996

“What of the future of learning disabilities? It is good! It is good because of the way you care” (p. 471).

Source: Myklebust, H. R. (1980). What is the future for LD? *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 13, 468-471.