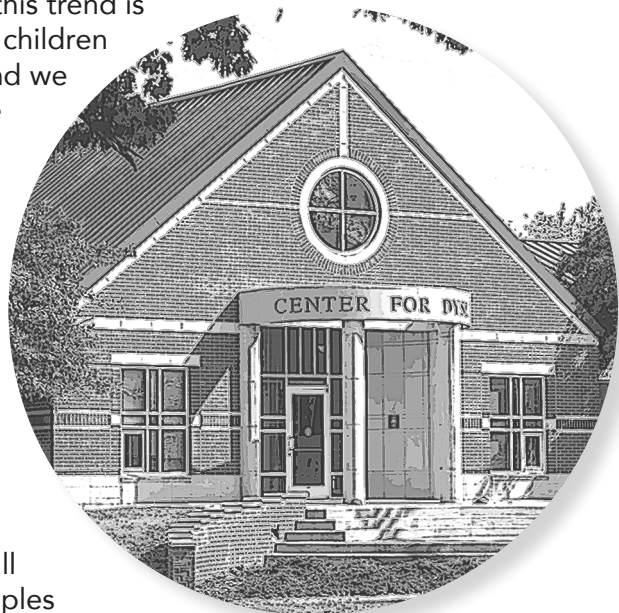


*1993-2018*

## Still Meeting the Challenge of Dyslexia and Reading Underachievement

Much has changed since the establishment of the Center for Dyslexia in 1993. Technology now inhabits every aspect of our lives, and the types of skills required to be competitive in today's economy have changed. As a result, literacy is the most fundamental life skill that a child must achieve to be a citizen of the 21st century.

In 1992, only 27 percent of the children in Tennessee were proficient readers. Today that number is 41 percent. While this trend is in the right direction, the majority of the children in our state are not proficient readers, and we are obligated to ensure that they receive the educational experiences needed to achieve literacy. As we commit ourselves to this obligation, we must always remember that, just as in 1993, some children across the state struggle to read in spite of applying themselves and being given the best classroom instruction educators can provide. The heartbreaking reality is that these children underachieve due to no fault of their own. This is the reality of dyslexia.



It is within this context that the center still remains committed to its founding principles as exemplified by its three pillars of excellence: Research, Educator Training, and Community Service and Outreach. And, it is on these pillars that we continue to build our efforts to ensure that every child in the state is provided with empirically validated instruction to develop the skills needed to become literate citizens of the 21st century. ■

### contents

- research matters and recent findings
- instruction matters and tools for educators
- center news
- events

# Research Matters

## Current Research Projects

The Research Laboratory at the center is actively engaged in several exciting projects led by our Chair of Excellence, Tim Odegard, and our new assistant director of educational services and research initiatives, Emily Farris. Several of these projects strive to inform efforts to identify and intervene with children who are at-risk for or who are experiencing reading underachievement. For example, we are exploring how children's persistence in the face of adversity and attention to written language impacts their reading abilities. These efforts build on a theoretical model that describes how cognitive and language

abilities, as well as social and emotional skills, may serve as protective factors in students to minimize the negative impacts associated with reading disability on their learning outcomes.

A generous gift from the International Dyslexia Association is supporting an investigation into the impact of simultaneous multi-sensory instructional techniques within direct instruction of reading on student progress. An advisory committee composed of leading experts in reading intervention from across the country continues to guide this effort, and we expect to start data collection in late spring. We will directly compare the use of different versions of instructional

techniques across groups of children receiving reading intervention.

We are especially excited to be using our new 64 channel EEG suite to allow us to look at more refined differences in the activation and coordination of distributed brain regions supporting the development of children's reading skills.

Center research was showcased in one of the research colloquia chaired by Odegard at the 2018 annual conference of the International Dyslexia Association held in Manshantucket, Connecticut, in October.

We invite you to visit the research section of our website, [mtsu.edu/dyslexia](https://mtsu.edu/dyslexia), to learn more about our research activities. ■



Emily Farris, Ph.D., assistant director for educational services and research initiatives

Emily Farris has joined the staff as assistant director of educational services and research initiatives. She completed her Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology at the University of Texas–Arlington and her postdoctoral fellowship in psychiatry and neuroscience at the University of California–San Francisco under the mentorship of Dr. Fumiko Hoeft.



Tim Odegard, Ph.D., chairholder, Kitty Murfree Chair of Excellence in Dyslexic Studies

Tim Odegard serves as the associate editor of *Annals of Dyslexia* and on the editorial board of *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*. These official publications of the International Dyslexia Association feature peer-reviewed research, as well as practical articles for educators, respectively.

## Recent Findings

### Dyslexia Legislation and the Identification of Dyslexia

There has been a proliferation of state laws intended to guide efforts to identify and intervene on behalf of children who struggle to read due to dyslexia. Many have cheered the passage of these laws, while others have objected, arguing that these laws result in the gross overidentification of dyslexia. Proponents and detractors alike rarely provide actual data to support their arguments. Anne Phillips, a Ph.D. student in MTSU's Literacy Studies program, collaborated with Tim Odegard to address the need for data to inform the public discourse surrounding dyslexia and reading underachievement. Their research on the impact of dyslexia legislation across the country on the identification rates of specific learning disability and dyslexia was published in the flagship research journal of the International Dyslexia Association, *Annals of Dyslexia*.

Given that most states define dyslexia as a form of a specific learning disability, one might expect to see a jump in the identification rates of specific learning

disability in states after they implemented a dyslexia law. However, the research shows that identification rates have not spiked in states with dyslexia laws. In addition, Phillips and Odegard also analyzed data from two states that mandate public schools to report their identification rates of dyslexia. Schools in both states identified dyslexia at rates that were below the most conservative estimate of dyslexia, which is 5% of the school-aged population. Identification rates became even lower when looking at middle and high school students. The majority of schools do not identify even a single child as having dyslexia in 6th grade and above.

While some may continue to argue that dyslexia legislation leads to the gross overidentification of dyslexia, the data simply do not support these claims. Sadly, the data suggest that even with dyslexia legislation in place, states are still struggling to identify children who have difficulty with reading due to dyslexia.

These data stress the need for the center to continue its work to aid educators in their efforts to identify and address the instructional needs of all children who struggle with reading, especially those whose difficulties are the result of dyslexia. ■

“

**even with dyslexia legislation in place, states are still struggling to identify children who have difficulty with reading due to dyslexia**

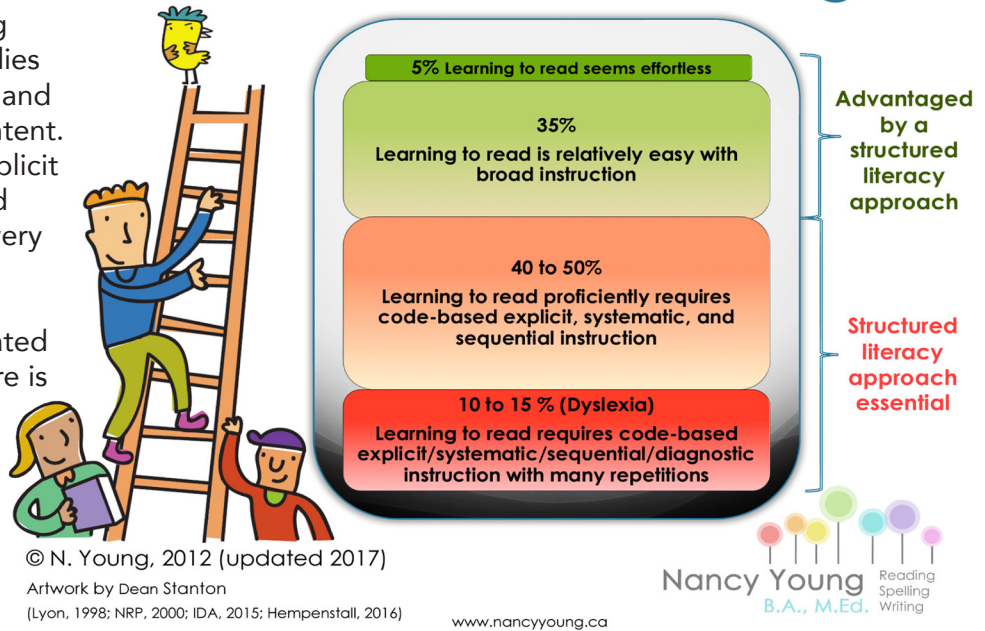
# Instruction Matters

## What Is Structured Literacy Instruction?

The term Structured Literacy refers to an approach to reading and spelling instruction that embodies key teaching methods and essential language content. The systematic and explicit approach of Structured Literacy instruction is very effective for students with characteristics of dyslexia, and, as indicated in the infographic, there is considerable evidence that it benefits all developing readers.

Structured Literacy instruction is distinguished by several key methods. Literacy content is taught in a systematic and cumulative manner. This means that content is organized from the most frequent and basic concepts of language to those that are more difficult, and that each subsequently introduced concept or skill is based on those previously learned. Instruction is also explicit, meaning all concepts are directly taught with abundant student-teacher interaction that allows for modeling, practice, and prompt corrective feedback. Diagnostic teaching ensures that instruction is differentiated based on continuous assessment of

## The Ladder of Reading



individual student needs and progress.

The language concepts essential to Structured Literacy instruction are:

- phonological and phonemic awareness (the sound structure of spoken words)
- sound-symbol association (including blending and segmenting for reading and spelling)
- syllabication (knowledge of syllable types and syllable division patterns)
- morphology (study of word meanings through base words, roots,

prefixes, and suffixes)

- syntax (sentence construction and grammar)
- semantics (constructing meaning from written language)

The Center's Dyslexia Success Series and district workshops are designed to increase educator depth of knowledge with the language concepts and instructional delivery methods characterized by Structured Literacy instruction. ■



# Tools for Educators

## Student Literacy Profile: Organizer for Student Data

The **Student Literacy Profile** was developed by center staff as a tool to aid schools in their efforts to identify a student's instructional needs in the area of literacy. This two-page graphic organizer allows teams to compile data about a student's literacy skills collected from a variety of sources, including:

- parent and teacher observations
- curriculum-embedded measures (CEM)
- curriculum-based measures (CBM)
- individually administered tests of achievement and phonological processing

Schools may use this tool to reveal which areas of literacy development are strengths or weaknesses for a particular student. This will help determine which skills should be targeted for reading instruction and intervention. The **Student Literacy Profile** also supports school teams in their efforts to identify students with characteristics of dyslexia.

**Version 3 of the Student Literacy Profile, updated in October 2018**, includes a detailed overview and directions for use. You can download a copy from the Educator and Parent Resources section of our website at [mtsu.edu/dyslexia/publications.php](http://mtsu.edu/dyslexia/publications.php). ■

### page 1

Student Literacy Profile: Summary of Skills					
Date: _____	Grade: _____	Observational Information	Curriculum Embedded Measurement (CEM)	Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM)	Norm Referenced Measure
Student Name: _____					
Reading Instruction: _____					
Is the student currently receiving intervention?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
If yes, please indicate:	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Education <input type="checkbox"/> Tier 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Tier 3				
Is there a family history of reading / spelling difficulties?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	P	T		
<b>ACADEMIC LANGUAGE SKILLS</b>					
Vocabulary: Non-Reading measure					
Vocabulary: Reading measure (When word reading deficits are documented, use a non-reading measure.)					
Listening Comprehension (When deficient, assess vocabulary.)					
<b>READING SKILLS</b>					
Reading Comprehension (When deficient, assess listening comprehension and reading fluency.)					
* Reading Fluency - Rate: wcpm (When deficient, assess word reading and decoding efficiency.)					
* Reading Fluency - Accuracy (When deficient, assess word reading and decoding efficiency.)					
* Word Reading Efficiency (When deficient, assess word reading accuracy.)					
* Phonological Decoding Efficiency (When deficient, assess decoding accuracy.)					
* Word Reading Accuracy					
* Phonological Decoding Accuracy					
<b>* SPELLING</b>					
<b>PHONOLOGICAL PROCESSING</b>					
Δ Phonological Awareness					
Δ Phonological Memory					
Δ Rapid Automatized Naming					
Place + In those cells for areas that the student demonstrates proficiency Place - In those cells for areas that the student does not demonstrate proficiency Place N/A In those cells for areas that data is unavailable * Characteristics of dyslexia are marked with an asterisk. Students with characteristics of dyslexia do not have to present with deficits in all of the marked areas. Δ Phonological processing areas associated with dyslexia					
Use this graphic organizer to compile available data and information about a student's literacy skills into one location. The resulting snapshot will reveal a pattern of strengths and weaknesses related to the student's literacy development. This information can be used to identify skills deficits to guide instructional decisions, and it can be used to support the identification of students with characteristics of dyslexia. Although it is not always necessary to obtain data for each of the listed skills, when deficits are identified, it is important that the skills that support those deficits are investigated to detect any sub-skills weaknesses that should become instructional targets.					
Ver.3.100418	Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia   Middle Tennessee State University	Page 3 of 4			

### page 2

Student Literacy Profile: Parent / Teacher Observation					
<b>Exclusionary Factors</b>					
Reflecting on the student's background and educational experience, consider the following influences on educational performance to ensure they are ruled out as primary reasons for the student's present difficulties with reading achievement. Any item that receives a 'no' response should be further investigated as a potential primary factor for the student's reading difficulties.					
<b>Consider the following in relation to the student:</b>					
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Consistent school attendance?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Appropriate core reading instruction?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Hearing, visual acuity & motor function within normal limits?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Proficiency with English language?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Has an Intellectual Disability been ruled out?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Has an Emotional Disturbance been ruled out?				
<b>Colorado Learning Difficulties Questionnaire- Reading Subscale (CLDQ-R)</b>					
The Colorado Learning Difficulties Questionnaire (CLDQ-R) is a screening tool designed to measure risk of reading disability (i.e., dyslexia) in school-age children (Willcutt, Boada, Riddle, Chhabildas, DeFries & Pennington, 2011). Parents and teachers can use this scale to provide additional developmental observations to complement the student's skills assessments. It is not a formal evaluation or diagnosis. This information will further support school-based identification of characteristics of dyslexia.					
<b>Read each statement and decide how well it describes the child. Circle the appropriate number. Be sure to select a response for every statement.</b>					
	Never/ not at all	Rarely/ a little	Sometimes	Frequently/ quite a bit	Always/ a great deal
1. Has difficulty with spelling	1	2	3	4	5
2. Has/had difficulty learning letter names	1	2	3	4	5
3. Has/had difficulty learning phonics (sounding out words)	1	2	3	4	5
4. Reads slowly	1	2	3	4	5
5. Reads below grade level	1	2	3	4	5
6. Requires extra help in school because of problems in reading and spelling	1	2	3	4	5
<b>Scoring:</b> Add up the circled numbers and record that as the <b>Total Score:</b> _____					
<b>Minimal Risk (&lt;16)</b>					
The score indicates that there is little in the child's developmental history to indicate that he/she is at risk for a reading disability (dyslexia). However, if concerns about the child's progress remain, further investigation and assessment by the school team is warranted to determine the nature of the difficulties.					
<b>Moderate Risk (16-21)</b>					
The score indicates that there are features of the child's developmental history (e.g., difficulty learning letters, required extra reading help) that may be consistent with a reading disability (dyslexia). Dyslexia is characterized by slow and/or effortful reading, difficulty sounding out words, and problems with spelling. A school evaluation is recommended in order to examine the nature of these difficulties.					
<b>Significant Risk (&gt;21)</b>					
The score indicates that there are several features of the child's developmental history (e.g., difficulty learning letters, required extra reading help) that are consistent with a reading disability (dyslexia). Dyslexia is characterized by slow and/or effortful reading, difficulty sounding out words, and problems with spelling. A formal evaluation is strongly recommended in order to determine appropriate instructional programming and supports for the child's reading progress.					
Ver.3.100418	Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia   Middle Tennessee State University	Page 4 of 4			

## Center News

### Center Staff Achieve CALP Certification

Congratulations to Jennifer Flipse, Erin Alexander, and Melinda Hirschmann for achieving national certification as Certified Academic Language Practitioners (CALP) through the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA). They qualified for this certification after completing a one-year training course, the associated practicum, and passing the Alliance National Registration Examination. ■



Jennifer Flipse, Ph.D.,  
CALP, director



Erin Alexander, Ed.S.,  
NCSP, CALP, assistant  
director for clinical  
services



Melinda Hirschmann,  
Ph.D., CALP, assistant  
director for educational  
services and school  
outreach

#### Recent

#### State, Regional, National, and International Conference Presentations

“Disentangling the Contribution of Direct Instruction and Practice on the Remediation of the Word Recognition Deficits of Children with Dyslexia” interactive poster presentation by Tim Odegard, Jennifer Flipse, and others at the 25th Annual Meeting, Society for the Scientific Study of Reading, Brighton, England, July 19, 2018

“Dyslexia in the Schools: What School Psychologists Need to Know” presented by Erin Alexander at the Mid-South Conference for Psychology in the Schools, Huntsville, Alabama, Oct. 16, 2018

“Identification of Dyslexia: A Hybrid Model” presented by Erin Alexander and Tim Odegard at the 2018 annual conference of the International Dyslexia Association, Manshantucket, Connecticut, Oct. 26, 2018

“Modernizing Orton-Gillingham Methodologies” presented by Tim Odegard, Emily Farris, and others at the 2018 annual conference of the International Dyslexia Association, Manshantucket, Connecticut, Oct. 27, 2018

“Trouble with Words: an Overview of Dyslexia; 10 Strategies to Maximize Your Small Group Reading Intervention; Phonemes and Graphemes and Morphemes... Oh My!” presented by Melinda Hirschmann at the 2018 annual conference of the Literacy Association of TN, Murfreesboro, Dec. 3, 2018

# FY 2018 Update

Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia

## Mission



Education



Research



Community

OVER THE PAST YEAR, EDUCATORS FROM

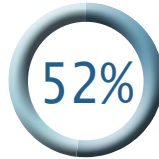
52

SCHOOL SYSTEMS HAVE ATTENDED OUR EVENTS



2 publications  
5 presentations

79  
Students Evaluated



Identified with Characteristics of Dyslexia



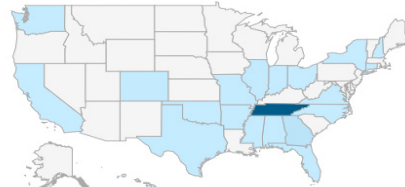
EDUCATORS EVALUATIONS EVALUATIONS & EDUCATORS

STUDENTS FROM  
26  
COUNTIES  
EVALUATED

[mtsu.edu/dyslexia](http://mtsu.edu/dyslexia)



4,274  
VISITORS



16 3,397  
Visitors by State



FOLLOW US!  
@DyslexiaMTSU

## Did you know?



17%

OF MAY EVALUATION APPLICANTS WERE IDENTIFIED IN THE SCHOOLS WITH AN IEP IN BASIC READING OR READING FLUENCY



88%

OF MAY EVALUATION APPLICANTS KNEW IDENTIFICATION COULD BE PERFORMED BY TESTING WITHIN THEIR SCHOOL



67%

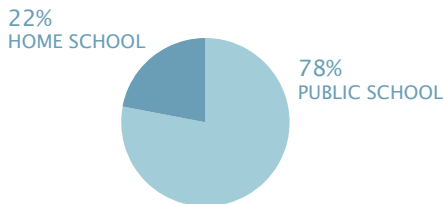
OF MAY EVALUATION APPLICANTS WERE IDENTIFIED PREVIOUSLY WITH CHARACTERISTICS OF DYSLEXIA



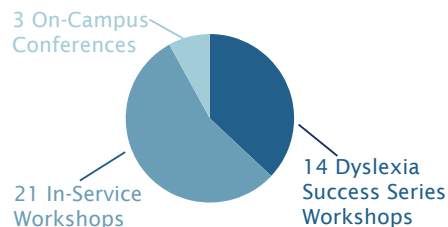
9%

OF MAY EVALUATION APPLICANTS HAD PREVIOUSLY REQUESTED AN EVALUATION FOR IDENTIFICATION WITHIN THEIR LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOL

## SCHOOL ATTENDED BY EVALUATION APPLICANTS



## EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH



## In-Service Workshops

1,419

Educators attended 21 workshops throughout Tennessee

## Dyslexia Success Series



283

Parents and educators registered for the Dyslexia Success Series workshops



## Events at MTSU

307

Educators attended our on-campus events

## Workshops and Conferences

### Registration Is Now Open for These Events:

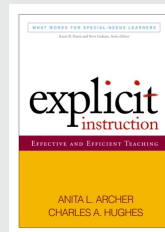
#### Dyslexia Success Series

Dyslexia Success Series workshops for educators continue on Feb. 23, and March 16. Topics include:

- Direct Vocabulary Instruction: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, presented by Jennifer Flipse, Ph.D.
- Reading Comprehension Strategies at the Sentence, Paragraph, and Text Level, presented by Jennifer Flipse, Ph.D.

A parent-focused Dyslexia Success Series workshop on Feb. 23 will offer information on

- Understanding School-Based Identification of Characteristics of Dyslexia, presented by Erin Alexander
- Structured Literacy Instruction: What It Is and Why It Works, presented by Emily Farris, Ph.D.



Explicit Instruction:  
The Magic Is in the  
Instruction  
March 22–23, 2019,  
presented by  
Anita Archer, Ph.D.

To optimize learning, students require bell-to-bell instruction; clear lesson goals; structured lessons with an introduction, body, and close; embedded formative assessment; active participation; consistent monitoring of performance; effective feedback; and judicious practice. Dr. Archer will review the research on explicit instruction and demonstrate its application across grade levels and domains. The first day will focus on the design of instruction and the second day on the delivery of instruction.

615-494-8880 | [dyslexia@mtsu.edu](mailto:dyslexia@mtsu.edu) | [mtsu.edu/dyslexia](http://mtsu.edu/dyslexia) |  [@DyslexiaMTSU](https://twitter.com/DyslexiaMTSU)