

Strategies to Address Specific Learning Disabilities in Reading

Coaching Guide



Module Summary

In this module, teachers will:

- Define what a specific learning disability in reading is.
- Identify three common areas of difficulty for students with a specific learning disability in reading.
- Examine reading strategies to support students with a specific learning disability in reading.

Module activities:

Teachers will learn common areas of struggle and research-based strategies to support students with a specific learning disability (SLD) in reading. Teachers have the opportunity to view videos of teachers and experts explaining different strategies.



Key Takeaways

Essential knowledge:

Upon completion, teachers should be able to explain what it means for a student to have a diagnosis of an SLD in reading. Teachers should also be able to describe three distinct areas of struggle for these students:

- **Word recognition:** How accurately and automatically a student reads words that follow and do not follow phonemic guidelines (Gillet, Temple, Temple, & Crawford, 2012; Turnbull et al., 2013).
- **Fluency:** The ability to read words correctly, with automaticity, and expression (Kuhn, 2011; Moats, 2005; Samuels, 2006).
- **Comprehension:** A student's ability to draw meaning from text (Bender, 2004; Gillet et al., 2012; Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2008; Turnbull et al., 2013).

Essential skill:

Upon completion, teachers should be able to identify specific areas of struggle for students with an SLD in reading. They should then work with the student and his family to implement relevant strategies as suggested on the *Strategies to Address Specific Learning Disabilities in Reading* resource. Teachers should decide how to track data from the strategy reflect on its effectiveness before selecting a new one to apply.

Essential mindset:

Regardless of grade level or content area teachers will have students with specific learning disabilities in reading. By being aware of areas of struggle and research based strategies, teachers will be better able to support these students.



The Skill in Action

A teacher working to support a student with an SLD in reading is aware of a student's IEP goals. The teacher uses indicators to identify the greatest area of struggle for the student and selects strategies to use that can address those struggles. The teacher works with the student and provides continual feedback during the process. The teacher is always focused on what a student is able to do and uses the student's abilities as a starting point.

If a teacher is unsure of a student's IEP, work with her to locate and learn this important document. In addition, if the teacher is unsure of how different areas of struggle relate to his or her content area, consider working with her to develop an awareness.



Questions for Discussion

The following is a list of suggested questions for engaging in a reflective dialogue with the teacher either before or after he or she attempts to implement the skill.

- How do you believe the knowledge and skills highlighted in this module will benefit your growth as a teacher?
- What were your key takeaways from the module?
- What are important mindsets associated with supporting students with an SLD?
- What strategy or strategies would benefit your student(s) most? Why?
- How can I support you in supporting students with an SLD in reading?
- Why is it important understand the impact an SLD in reading has on a student?



Coaching Moves

Situation:

The teacher tries using a strategy but the student does not make progress.

Ask:

- What indicates the student's struggle in this area?
- What are strengths and abilities of this student?
- How does reading impact your content area or grade level?
- How long did you try the strategy for?
- Did you consult with the student before beginning the strategy?
- How did you keep track of the student's progress?

Suggest:

- Develop a plan, along with the student and her family, to track data.
- Collaborate with the student's family for ways to support her at home.
- Find texts about topics that interest the student, then use strategies to access those texts.
- Make it a point to give the student positive, specific praise when they progress.



Standards

InTASC: 2(f) The teacher accesses resources, supports, and specialized assistance and services to meet particular learning differences or needs.

2(h) The teacher understands students with exceptional needs, including those associated with disabilities and giftedness, and knows how to use strategies and resources to address these needs.