Three Actionable Strategies to Overcome Common Dyslexia Screening Challenges
Effectively Identifying and Supporting Students at Risk for Dyslexia

Dr. Suzanne Jimenez
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH)
Director, Academic Planning and Data Analytics
Overview

1. The role and challenge of dyslexia screening
2. How to assess without bias and at scale
3. Actionable strategies for your school or district
Getting Started: Guiding Principles

- Equity
- Inclusive
- Urgency
- Transparency
- Consistency
Only 7 states along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico do not have some legislation regarding dyslexia.
Teaching ALL Children to Read

- The most important reason to conduct screenings is to identify students who are at risk for reading problems and require early intervention.
- It is estimated that 1 in 5 individuals have dyslexia or other significant reading problems.
- We can prevent reading failure with effective screening and quality instruction.
Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

- Screening results can provide perspective on the needs of students in a class/school/district.
- Using a tiered approach highlights the need for intervention and extension.
- Differentiation for different areas of reading instruction can be supported with an MTSS approach.
The Role of Screening

- Universal screening for dyslexia and other reading problems allows teachers to plan appropriate instructional strategies for each student to ensure growth from the first day.

- Screenings identify students who may need specialized instruction or additional time building foundational skills.

- Valid and reliable results alert the teacher to the potential need for further assessment.

- Actionable data ensures that students receive personalized targeted instruction.
Challenges in Screening for Dyslexia

- Time consuming
- Lack of teacher training/knowledge
- Consistency in test administration and scoring
- Screener must be reliable and valid
- Essential components must be included in screener
- Preserving instructional time
How to Assess Without Bias and at Scale

Effective screening occurs when students are all assessed in the same manner using tools that are free of bias.

What are considerations for reading screening?

- Selection of screening tool
- Training/professional learning for teachers and administrators to understand the purpose for screening, implications of results for instruction and further assessment
- Screen universally, filter for further assessment
Planning for Scale

- Available resources
  Personnel, time, format (paper or electronic)
- Student population
  District/school/class size
- Scheduling
  Assessment vs Instruction
Where to Begin: Strategies for Your School or District

- Develop action plan for leadership, coaching and professional learning
- Use data and collaboration to establish priorities
- Develop plan to identify resources and strategies to address priorities
- Enlist stakeholder engagement
Assessment

- Analyze student performance and proficiency data.
- Inventory current practices for screening and instruction.
- Identify gaps in instructional strategies and resources.
- Consider achievement and proficiency trends.
- Consider student outcomes using a tiered approach to learn or estimate potential need for *specialized instruction* (not the same as special education).
- Plan for verification of tier estimates with screening results.
Instruction

- Screening data must be actionable.
- Instructional decisions are informed by ongoing progress monitoring.
- Ensure availability of core curriculum and supplemental interventions that can meet the needs of all students.
- Station rotation model allows all students to experience a personalized approach to learning.
- Explicit, teacher-directed instruction is key.
- Instructional design is not either/or for reading.
  - Phonics and traditional balanced literacy components are both important.
Monitoring

- Consider how screening practices will be conducted for new students.
- Plan for development of observation or walk-through tools that demonstrate how instructional design/implementation reflects outcomes.
- Conduct regular observations, data talks, and reflection protocols to monitor fidelity of practice in screening and in instruction.
- Use multiple measures to monitor student outcomes.
Equitable access to appropriate assessment, quality instruction, and effective intervention for each student is a fundamental right. Effective screening is the first step.

“I raise up my voice not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard. We cannot succeed when half of us are held back.”

- Malala Yousafzai
Questions & Discussion