

Foster Equity in Learning Through Structured Literacy

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Transforming Literacy Instruction: The Power of Structured Literacy

In 2024, Gov. Kathy Hochul unveiled the “**Back to Basics**” initiative, emphasizing the need for scientifically proven methods to transform reading instruction in New York schools. This initiative aims to reset how schools approach reading, ensuring every student, regardless of background, has access to the high-quality education they deserve.

School administrators play a pivotal role in bringing the science of reading into their schools and fostering instructional equity. The answer lies in adopting Structured Literacy.

Structured literacy goes beyond traditional teaching methods. It represents the practical application of decades of research, translating the science of reading into classroom practices that can reach every student. With a thoughtful and evidence-based approach, Structured Literacy provides the tools and strategies necessary to meet students where they are and guide them toward success. Lexia® curriculum programs utilize the science of reading to promote equity in the classroom.

The Science of Reading

Evidence



Structured Literacy

Application

Research shows that nearly all students—95%—have the potential to master the building blocks of literacy when they receive high-quality instruction rooted in the science of reading. This approach doesn’t just teach reading; it ensures every child, regardless of their individual challenges, is given an **equal opportunity to succeed**. Structured Literacy is explicit, systematic, and responsive, allowing educators to adapt to the needs of all learners, including those with learning disabilities, dyslexia, and Emergent Bilingual status.

Applying a science of reading-based approach is the best decision available to school administrators dedicated to promoting equity in their schools. Structured Literacy is the key to unlocking improved literacy outcomes **across the board**.

Explore how Structured Literacy can transform your school and bring the science of reading to every classroom. Learn more about **[Structured Literacy Professional Learning Resources](#)**.



The Simple View of Reading: A Proven Framework for Literacy Success

To ensure all students **have** the best chance to succeed, school administrators must adopt **an evidence-based and inclusive** reading instruction methodology. As a result, Structured Literacy **stands out as the approach every school should consider**.

Structured Literacy is built on the Simple View of Reading, a framework developed in the 1980s that remains foundational in reading science today. This approach isn't just a trend or a fad—it's a time-tested, scientific method ensuring comprehensive and effective reading instruction.

Simple View of Reading (the WHAT)



The Simple View of Reading emphasizes reading comprehension is the product of two essential components: Word Recognition and Language Comprehension. Both are critical. If a student struggles with either, their overall reading ability suffers. Therefore, both elements must be incorporated into your school's literacy program to achieve equitable instruction and ensure skilled reading.

- **Word Recognition** is the ability for students to recognize words accurately and instantly. This foundational skill allows students to read fluently without hesitation, setting the stage for deeper comprehension.
- **Language Comprehension** is understanding the meaning of sentences and texts. It involves interpreting the words recognized and constructing meaning through listening or reading.

When these two elements are effectively taught through explicit, systematic, cumulative, multisensory, and responsive instruction, students are not just learning to read; they are learning to understand, engage, and thrive academically.



Some specific literacy skills crucial within this framework and particularly relevant include:



Oracy: The development of speaking and listening skills, which are foundational for reading and writing. Strong oracy skills enhance students' ability to engage in language-rich classroom discussions and build comprehension through active listening.



Phonemic Awareness: This is the understanding that words comprise individual sounds (phonemes). It's a critical skill for developing word recognition and for students to decode new words.



Vocabulary Development: Expanding a student's word knowledge is key to understanding complex texts. A robust vocabulary allows students to connect new and known concepts, vital for language comprehension.



Fluency: The ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression. Fluency bridges word recognition and comprehension, enabling students to focus on understanding the text rather than decoding each word.

Incorporating Structured Literacy into your school's curriculum is a commitment to proven methods and a step toward fostering accurate educational equity. It ensures every student, no matter their background or challenges, has the opportunity to become a confident, skilled reader. Lexia offers evidenced-based, professional development and instructional literacy programs that ensure every teacher and student receives the learning support they deserve. As you consider how to implement Structured Literacy in your school, use the following checklist to confirm your instructional practices align with these proven principles.

Structured Literacy Implementation: A Checklist for School Leaders



As a school leader, making sure your literacy instruction aligns with the principles of Structured Literacy is essential for fostering educational equity and improving student outcomes. This is a checklist to help you evaluate and implement Structured Literacy practices in your school.

What Literacy Educators Should Do:

- Provide Explicit Instruction:**
Clearly explain new concepts, guide practice, and provide immediate feedback.
- Teach Reliable Spelling Patterns:**
Focus on spelling patterns and rules to build foundational word recognition skills.
- Deliver Systematic and Cumulative Instruction:**
Follow a logical sequence based on prior knowledge.
- Use Multisensory/Multimodal Learning:**
Engage multiple senses to reinforce learning.
- Apply Diagnostic and Responsive Teaching:**
Adjust lessons based on student progress and feedback.

What Literacy Educators Should Avoid:

- Expecting Students to Learn Through Exposure:**
Avoid relying on students to grasp new concepts intuitively.
- Focusing Solely on Memorization:**
Do not limit spelling instruction to word lists without teaching patterns.
- Using Random or Disjointed Sequences:**
Ensure all lessons are connected and follow a logical progression.
- Limiting Instruction to One Modality:**
Engage multiple senses to accommodate different learning styles.
- Ignoring Student Feedback:**
Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach; adjust instruction based on ongoing assessments.



Take the crucial step of aligning your school's approach with Structured Literacy principles to unlock the potential of every learner through [research-proven methods](#).

Contact Sales

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*Systematic: logical order of skills and
concepts, simple to complex*

Cumulative: new learning building on prior
knowledge

**Meaning must be
connected to those
spoken words.**

Multisensory/ Multimodal: use of multiple senses or modalities

Explicit: directly taught

**Symbols on a printed
page must be translated
into spoken words.**

Diagnostic/Responsive: progress is monitored; instruction is adjusted