



Title: Every Word Wants to Be a Sight Word When It Grows Up

Audience: All K-12 educators, language and literacy specialists, administrators, and other stakeholders

Instructional Level: Introductory

Course Description:

Automatic word recognition is essential for proficient reading. But how do words become “sight words”? What factors impact the development of orthographic representations (orthographic mappings) of words in long-term lexical memory that are needed for automatic and accurate reading and spelling? What instructional practices facilitate their development? Which practices interfere? What role does statistical learning play?

In this webinar, you’ll get answers to these questions and leave with practical ideas you can immediately put into use with your students. You’ll learn activities designed to develop robust orthographic lexical representations of all words, regularly and irregularly spelled, to support spelling accuracy, reading fluency and comprehension, and writing fluency and expression. You’ll leave with ideas that you can immediately put into action to quickly observe positive changes in your students’ learning.

Learning Objectives:

1. Distinguish between “sight word” and “irregularly spelled” word.
2. Explain the role of implicit learning in the abstraction of statistical regularities and constraints of the orthography of a language.
3. Define a word-specific orthographic representation, describe how it develops over time and factors that determine how quickly it develops.
4. Explain how our understanding of the development of “sight words” impacts the way we teach our students and why struggling students, including students with dyslexia, require direct and explicit instruction for the development of "sight words".
5. Explain why three common teaching practices – guessing a word from context when reading, writing spelling words multiple times, and flash card drills for sight words – may limit or interfere with students’ acquisition and development of orthographic knowledge and how to tweak these activities for better outcomes.