**Research-Based Literacy Interventions for Students who are Deaf/Hard of Hearing**

**Introduction**

Reading in school is critically important for students who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) because they are not always afforded access to the necessary structure and/or communication skills for reading in their homes. This translates into students who are DHH being significantly outperformed by their hearing peers in the area of literacy (Luckner et al., 2006; Marschark et al., 2009; Easterbrooks & Beal-Alvarez, 2012; van Staden, 2013). Nearly 60% of high school graduates who are DHH leave school reading at a 4th-grade level or below (Traxler, 2002 as cited in Ausbrooks-Rusher, Schimmel & Edwards, 2012). Additionally, students with severe to profound hearing loss score significantly lower on reading assessments than those with mild to moderate hearing loss (Schimmel, Edwards, and Prickett, 1999). The reasons for this phenomenon are as varied and intricate as the students themselves. They all point to one indisputable conclusion: the status quo is not working and a change is needed.

Luckner et al. (2006), claimed that “without well-developed literacy skills, students cannot participate fully in classroom learning.” Each child, regardless of hearing, has the right to equal access to the classroom and learning activities. If teachers are not equipped with tools and strategies that are specific to teaching literacy to a child with hearing loss, then that child is not being provided equal access to the classroom. Students who are deaf/hard of hearing often need explicit and specially designed instruction in reading. Identifying gaps through assessments, prioritizing and designing intensive instruction and intervention through the goals and objectives, and determining related services and supplementary aids and services, while aligning service provision across instruction environments is critical for students to close the academic and social gaps they may have.

**Legal Guidance**

Florida law states that if a student needs intensive reading instruction, that instructions must be “research-based reading instruction that has been proven to accelerate the progress of students exhibiting a reading deficiency.” (Florida Statute 1011.62 (9)(a))

Florida law also states: school districts shall assist schools and teachers with the implementation of explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading instruction and intervention strategies for students promoted with a good cause exemption which research has shown to be successful in improving reading among students who have reading difficulties. (Florida Statute 1008.25)
Florida Statute 1001.215 (8) [emphasis added] says:

"[Districts] Work with the Florida Center for Reading Research to identify scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional and intervention programs that incorporate explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension and incorporate decodable or phonetic text instructional strategies. Reading intervention includes evidence-based strategies frequently used to remediate reading deficiencies and includes, but is not limited to, individual instruction, multisensory approaches, tutoring, mentoring, or the use of technology that targets specific reading skills and abilities."

Rationale and Resources

In the consideration of research-based reading strategies or interventions specifically designed for students who are DHH, the empirical evidence is scarce. We need more research on instructional methods specific to means of auditory access and communication modality; more controlled studies on the effects of interventions; more data on teaching to a student’s chosen communication modality. Until such a time that a robust body of research is available, it is vital that teachers use the programs that are research-proven for students who are DHH with fidelity.

Florida’s MTSS Booklet states: The primary function of district leadership is to ... 3) ensure that district policies are supportive of, and not barriers to, the implementation of the model...

The What is “Special” about Special Education? MTSS document can also help clarify any misconceptions.

To learn more about reading instruction specifically for students who are DHH consider taking the online course Language Reading Connection for D/HH (LRC-D/HH) and DeafEd Express in the BEESS PD Portal.

The following are research-based interventions and curricula designed for the specific task of improving literacy for learners who are D/HH. The highly-specialized needs related to incomplete access to auditory information are key components of each of these programs.

- Foundations for Literacy
- Fingerspelling Our Way to Reading
- Explicit Contextualized Vocabulary for D/HH
- Fairview Learning
- See the Sounds Visual Phonics
- Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons with Visual Phonics

RMTC-DHH provides information as a free resource to teachers, professionals, and parents in order to pass along potentially useful information and expand the knowledge and opportunities available to educators and families of children who are deaf/hard of hearing. The information included does not reflect any specific endorsement by any parties involved. Revised 11/13/19
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**CLAD Foundations for Literacy**

*Foundations for Literacy* is a comprehensive Pre-K literacy program. It can be used in K-2nd grade as both a reading and language intervention. Taught via whole group, this curriculum teaches language through many shared play activities. It has lots of great activities for students to develop phonological and phonemic awareness for students who communicate via auditory/oral means. It may not be appropriate for teaching phonological and phonemic awareness to students who sign. “*Foundations for Literacy* is an early literacy intervention developed specifically for young children who are deaf and hard of hearing. Targeted learning objectives include vocabulary, narrative skills, alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, and reading decodable words and short connected text. Each lesson includes fun, age-appropriate, integrated activities; instruction is differentiated based on children’s speech perception and language abilities.”

**Florida Trainer:**

Jessica Wamsley, jmwmde@aol.com, [Flyer](#)

**CLAD Fingerspelling Our Way to Reading**

The *Fingerspelling Our Way to Reading* materials have been developed for grades K-2. This supplementary intervention program addresses phonological and phonemic awareness for students who communicate via ASL. The lessons are only 25 minutes and can be taught individually or in whole group.

**Florida Trainers:**

- Gina Gilmore, gina.gilmore89@gmail.com
- Randi Mitchell, mitchellr@fsdbk12.org
- Krista Phelps, teachdhh@gmail.com
CLAD Explicit Contextualized Vocabulary (ECV) - DHH

Explicit Contextualized Vocabulary Instruction - DHH (ECV-DHH) is an approach to content area vocabulary instruction for use with young students who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH). The explicit and contextualized instructional strategies expose students to new words and give students practice using those words expressively. The website will help professionals better understand the purpose of each component of instruction, the steps needed to implement the components, and suggestions for planning their own units of instruction using ECV-DHH.

Florida Trainer:
Jennifer Catalano, JCatalano@flagler.edu

Fairview Learning

Fairview Learning is a set of 5 high yield reading strategies that can be in conjunction with any district-adopted curriculum with students in grades K-12. At Tier 1, Fairview can be implemented with the whole class as you work on the grade-level materials. It can also be used as a Tier 2 or Tier 3 intervention when used to remediate skills in a very small group or individually using materials at the student’s instructional level. The individual skills are meant to be taught concurrently, as they are embedded throughout the protocol.
- Adapted Dolch/Multiple meaning words
- Bridging (Reading for meaning)
- Word Study (Phonemic Awareness) – Biggest impact when used with students who have residual hearing that can access letter sounds.
- Reading Process (Comprehension and Fluency)
- Written Expressive English

Trainer:
Trish Vierra, Fairview Learning Training

Florida Coaches:
- Sherry Conrad, sherry.conrad@rmtcdhh.org
- Nancy McFalls, nancy.mcfalls@rmtcdhh.org
- Cara Wilmot, cara.wilmot@rmtcdhh.org
**Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons** paired with **Visual Phonics**

*Teach Your Child to Read in 100 Easy Lessons* is a complete, step-by-step program that shows teachers how to simply and clearly teach their students to read using the DISTAR method. Twenty minutes a day is the standard for implementation, and within 100 teaching days, the students are expected to be reading on a solid second-grade reading level. It's a scripted, easy-to-follow, and enjoyable way to help students gain the essential skills of reading. *The University of North Florida* conducted research using this program with **Visual Phonics** with students who are D/HH in an auditory-oral program.

**Florida Trainers:**
Caroline Guardino, caroline.guardino@unf.edu
Candace McIntire, candace.mcintire@rmtcdhh.org
Cara Wilmot, cara.wilmot@rmtcdhh.org

**Visual Phonics**

Visual Phonics is a “multisensory approach for reinforcing oral language development, speech articulation, literacy, and spelling skills for students who are bilingual or possess diverse learning needs. This strategy can be used with any district-adopted curriculum or intervention for students learning phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding skills. Students who benefit most from this approach are those who are able to associate meaning with sound.

**Find a Trainer**

**Florida Trainers:**
Noel Cherasaro, noelcherasaro@hotmail.com
Krista Phelps-Elliott, teachdhh@gmail.com
Sherry Conrad, sherry.conrad@rmtcdhh.org
Felicia Massie, mfmassie@gmail.com
References: