



Shapes Transformed Into Letters



Discovering Reading at 17

Simon S
Emily Wilson



Why are we here?

We are here to share the importance of learning how to read at a young age through Simon's story and give resources for how this can be done.

Simon always looked at traffic signs as colors and shapes, but letters are more than shapes. Reading was unlocked for Simon at 17 after years of struggle in school.

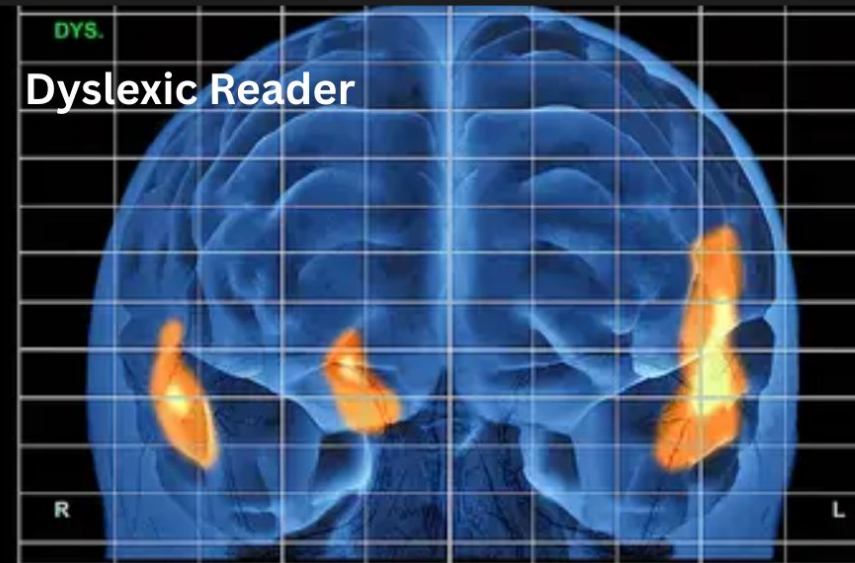
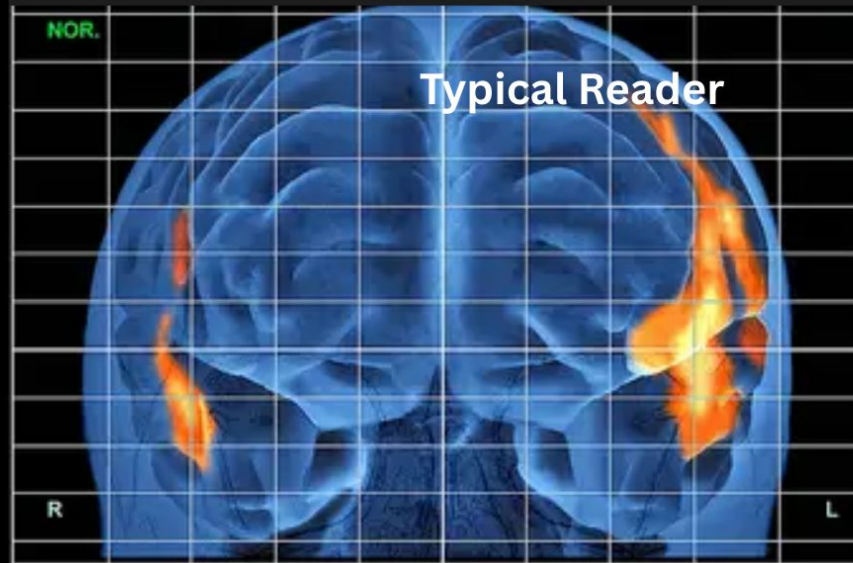
We hope to:

- Help another student get through school without dread every day
- Inspire students, teachers, and families to apply the science of reading early.
- Offer practical action steps for school teams



Reading is everywhere. It is the basis to
have access to **EVERYTHING!**

-Simon S



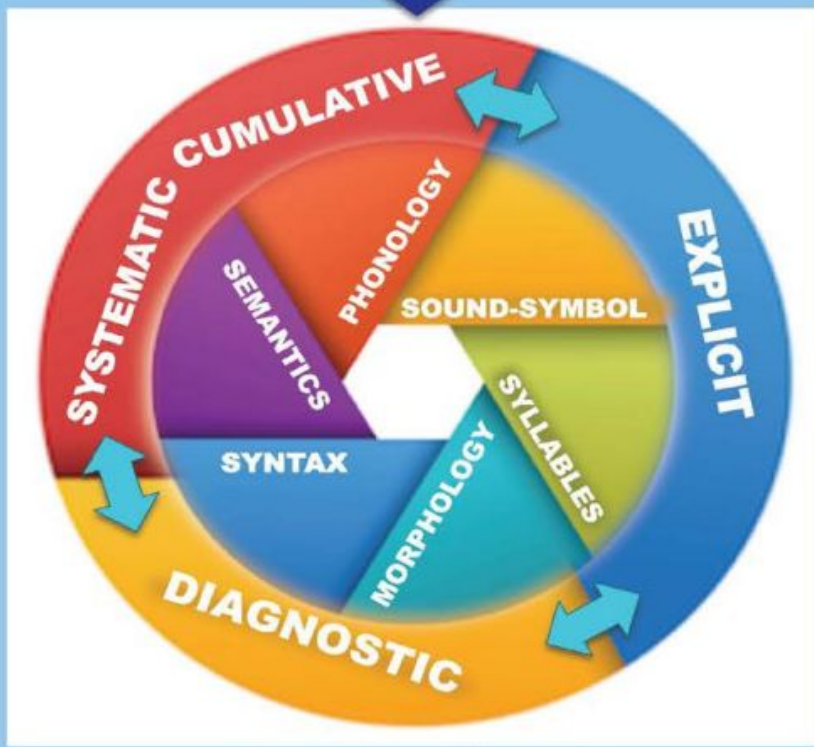
[HTTPS://WWW.WEBMD.COM/CHILDREN/UNDERSTANDING-DYSLEXIA-BASICS](https://www.webmd.com/children/understanding-dyslexia-basics)

Simon does not have a formal diagnosis of dyslexia, however he does have a language-based reading disability per IDEA & CDE and has a reading deficit is consistent with dyslexia. We use both terms.

What Is Structured Literacy?

STRUCTURED LITERACY WHEEL

Effective reading instruction for most children incorporates *all* this.



Inner Circle: Elements
Outer Circle: Teaching Principles

Learn about the **SCIENCE** behind
Structured Literacy to teach all
students to read proficiently.

International Dyslexia Association

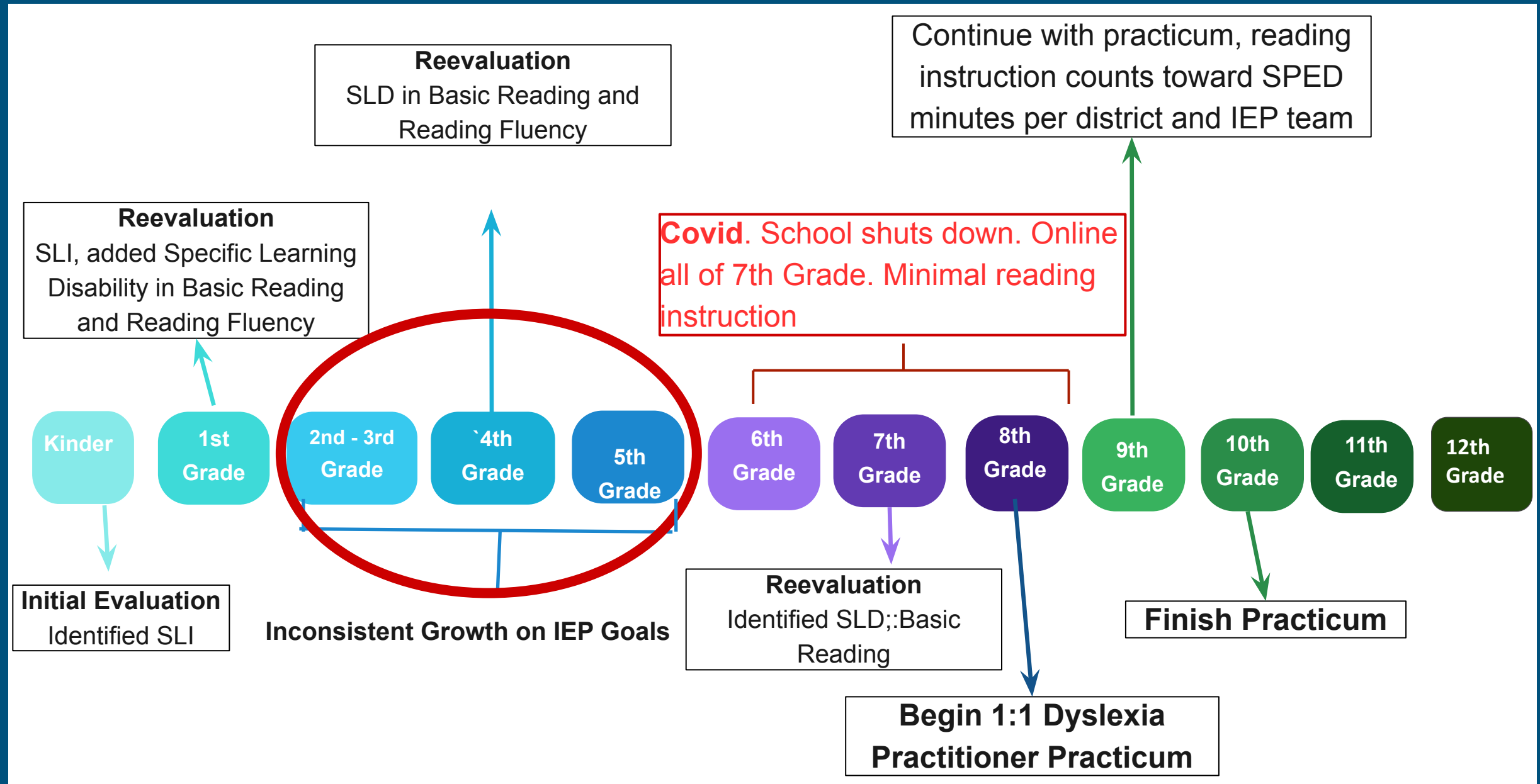
DyslexiaIDA.org

DyslexiaLibrary.org

IDATV.org

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Progress Made / Goal Met?

Inconsistent Reporting

Baseline: Reading up to 7-letter closed syllable words with 85% accuracy..

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GOAL: Decode closed syllable words up to 6 sounds including blends, digraphs, the suffix-s, and multisyllabic words from 33% accuracy to 80%

GOAL: Decode closed syllables of 4-6 sounds which include digraphs, blends, suffix-s and **welded sounds (ing, ank)** from 0% to 70%

GOAL: Read a list of **50 real and nonsense multi-syllable words** (open, closed, Unit or Vowel-Team) with 85% accuracy.

GOAL: read list of **50 real and nonsense multi-syllable words** (open, closed, Unit or Vowel-Team) with 85% accuracy.

2nd
Grade

3rd
Grade

4th
Grade

5th
Grade

PROGRESS REPORTED:
PROGRESS MADE. When given a list of CVC words, he is able to sound out 100% of the CVC words.

PROGRESS REPORTED:
GOAL MET. Decodes 70% of closed syllable words that contain digraphs, blends, and the suffix-s. He **needs support to decode words with welded sounds**

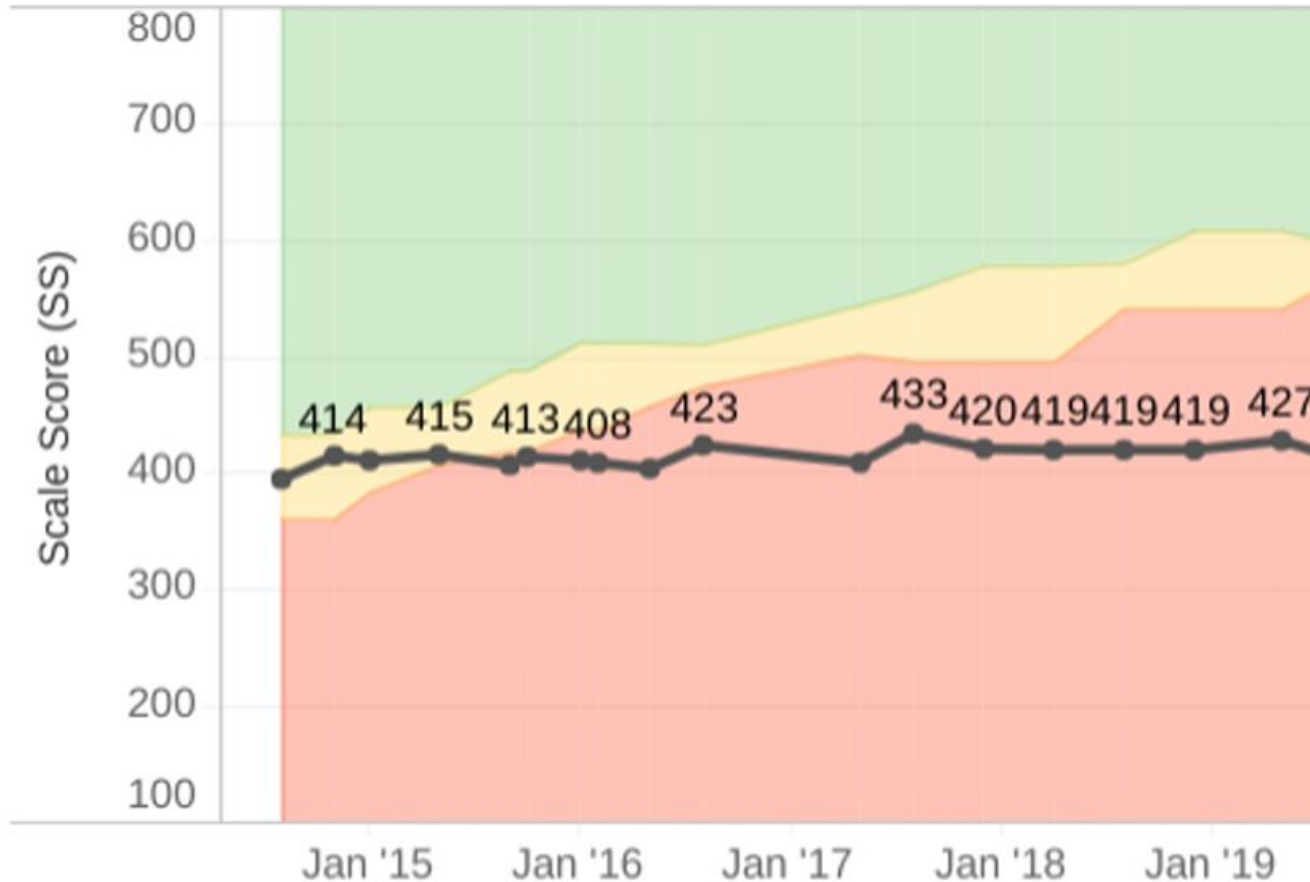
PROGRESS REPORTED:
GOAL MET. (Read list of 50 closed-syllable words with 80% accuracy)



Progress Made / Goal Met?

Inconsistent Reporting

i-Ready: Overall



i-Ready: Domains

Grade Level at Test	i-Ready Window	Overall Reading Level
04	Fall	Level 1
	Winter	Level 1
	Spring	Level 1
05	Fall	Level 1
	Winter	Level 1
	Spring	Level 1

Progress Made / Goal Met?

Inconsistent Reporting

- If the reading goal was met, why decrease skill or success criteria in the new goal?
- **If progress is not being made, what do we need to change?**

SIMON: Elementary School

- At school I started faking because I had to sit down to “read books.”
- Library line
- Pro “trash” handwriting skills were born!
- I was introduced to technology: Google Read & Write and Text to Speech.
- My own closet!

Simon has many strengths:

- Memory
- Vocabulary
- Background knowledge
- Curiosity
- Visual-spatial skills
- Oral language
- Self-awareness
- Appreciates Ms. Wilson's sense of humor
- Tenacity and perseverance



So, what do we do?

- Phonemic Awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

1. ASSESS (evaluation, baseline, progress): **What is the bottom line?**

2. SYSTEMATIC, EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION. **Data-driven**, sequential, interactive, sequential, sufficient practice!

3. MASTERY-oriented. Student must have **automaticity**.

Scarborough's Rope

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

Increasingly
Strategic

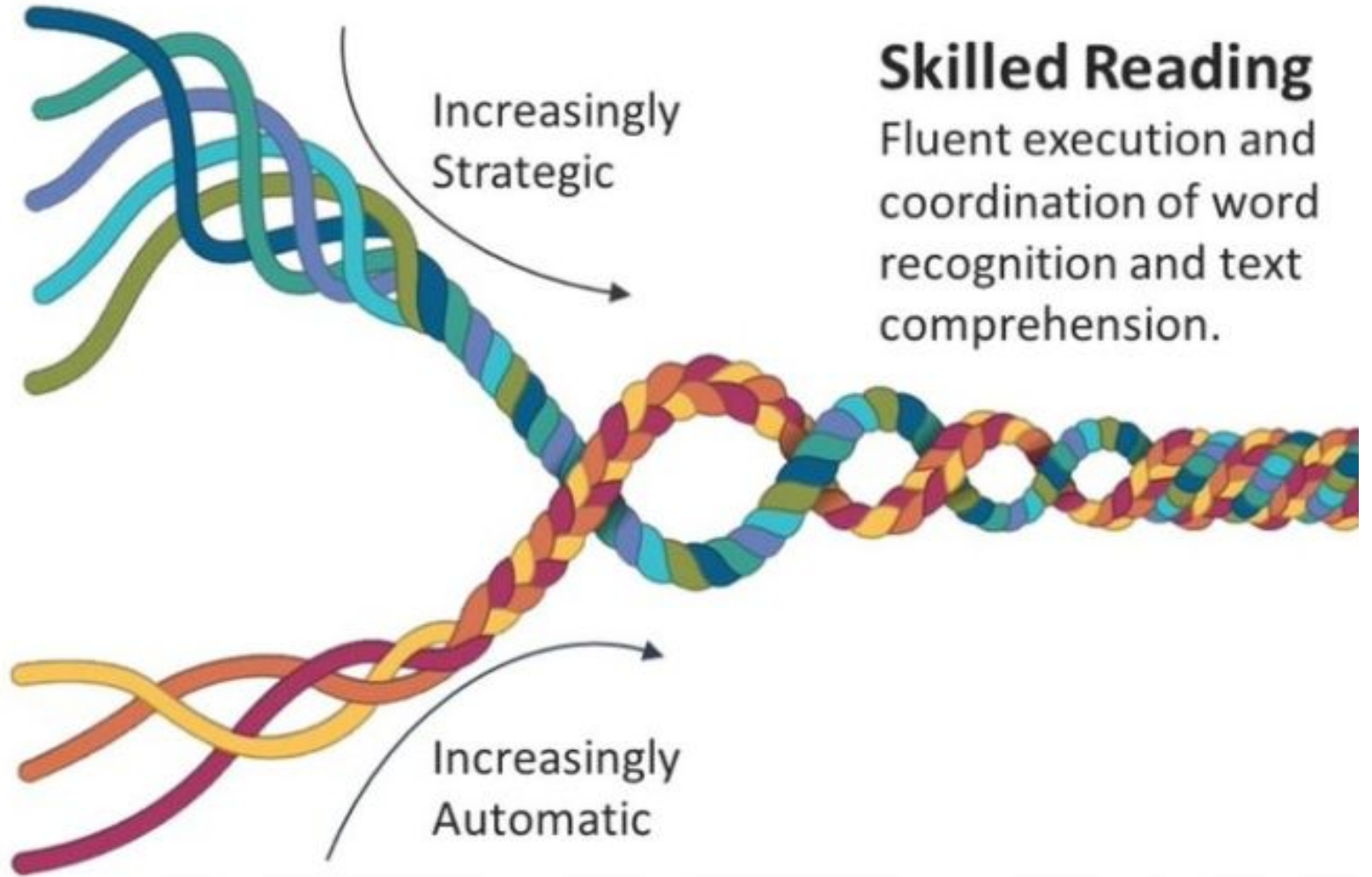
Skilled Reading

Fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition

Increasingly
Automatic



Repetition, repetition, repetition...

*Simon has needed approximately
150 - 200 repetitions (or 4 to 6
lessons) for each new
concept/sound.* (Each lesson is 60-90
minutes long)

- Typical readers need 4 - 14 repetitions to learn a new concept.
- Primary-aged children with dyslexia need 14 - 50 (or so) repetitions.
- Older teens and adults may need 50 - 200+ repetitions.

Teachers might need to ask for help!

Sometimes student needs are beyond our experience. As Simon says, reading is CRITICAL.

- It is ESSENTIAL to collect data. If the student is not making progress we MUST intensify or change our instruction.
- We HAVE TO group students based on their identified needs, NOT by grade-level. It is worth the struggle.

Being a teacher is an enormous job. Being a Special Educator is nearly impossible. Yet we MUST help kids close their achievement gaps as soon as possible. Especially with reading.

- We might need to seek extra training.
- We have 5 decades of research backing us up!
- Students need us to fight for them and to teach them directly.

Beginning of 6th Grade:

WIST (Word Identification and Spelling Test)

- 35/105 Letter sounds
- Read 4 whole words correctly

- **Total: 4/19 syllables (14 words attempted).**
 - 3/3 v-c-e syllables
 - 1/9 closed syllables
 - 0/2 open syllables
 - 0/3 r-controlled syllables
 - 0/2 vowel teams.

6th
Grade

7th
Grade

8th
Grade

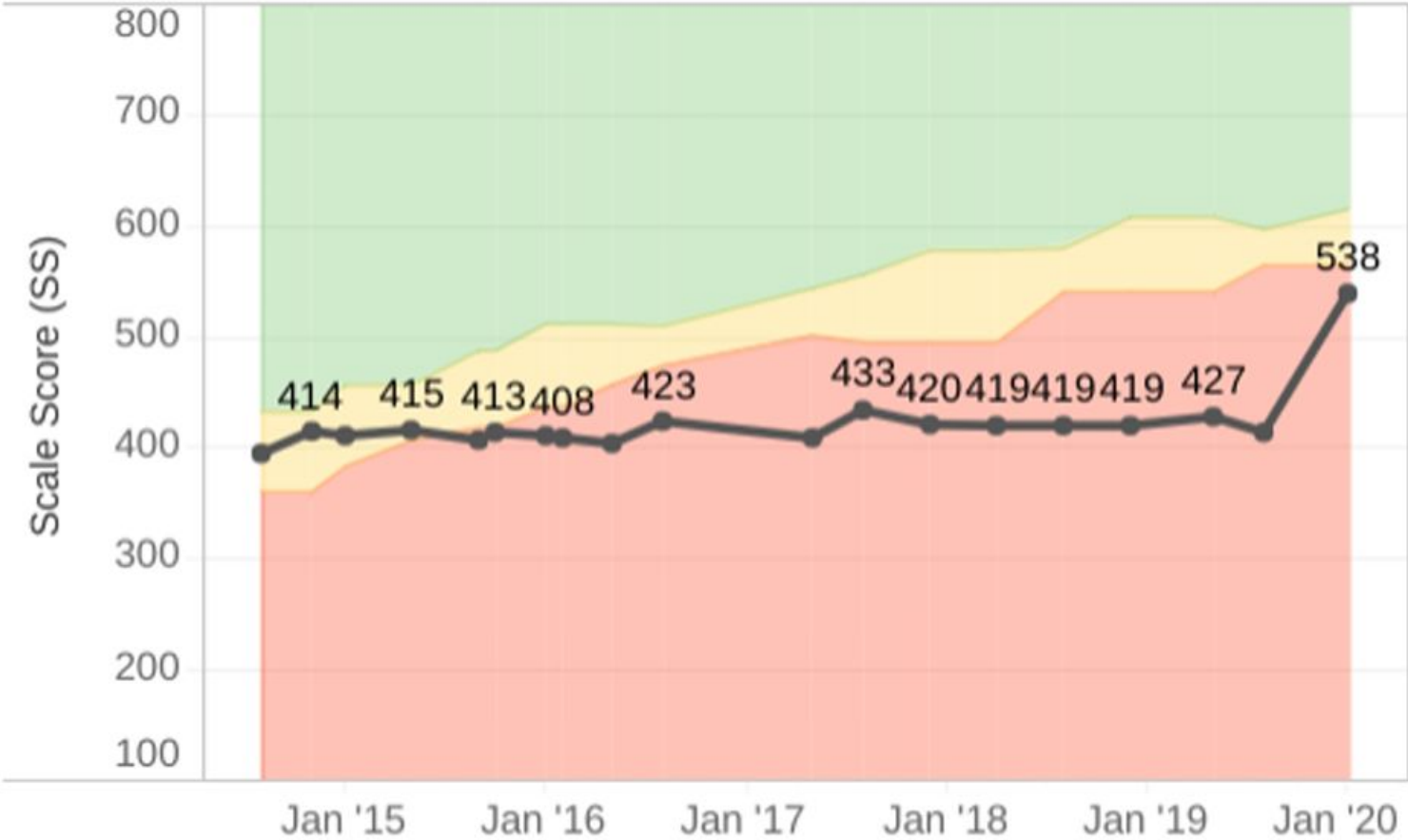
Covid. School shuts down.
Online all of 7th Grade.
Minimal reading instruction

Beginning of 8th Grade:
Begin 1:1 Dyslexia
Practitioner Practicum

Progress Made / Goal Met?

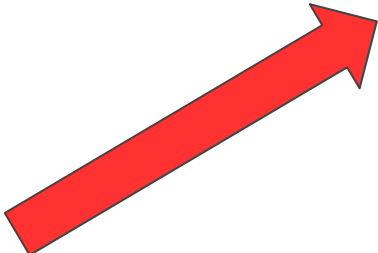
Inconsistent Reporting

i-Ready: Overall



i-Ready: Domains

Grade Level at Test	i-Ready Window	Overall Reading Level
04	Fall	Level 1
	Winter	Level 1
	Spring	Level 1
05	Fall	Level 1
	Winter	Level 1
	Spring	Level 1
06	Fall	Level K
	Winter	Level 3
		SS



SIMON: Middle School Experiences

- Accommodations aren't cheat codes!
- Reading the notes in band was so incredibly difficult I had my own system, I ended up leaving band
- Homework
- Positive relationships with teachers

What was working?

Middle School

- COMMUNICATION between special education teacher and general education teachers.
- More communication between special education teacher and family.
- SELF-DETERMINATION skills incorporated into instruction and school culture
- Administration was supportive: the sped team created a SCHEDULE with admin centered around special education classes.

- Direct, explicit, systematic instruction.
- All three students in LL class had similar IEP goals
- Simon had more intense needs. When other students could work independently Simon got 1:1 practice.
- Focus on ACCOMMODATIONS

Disability is NOT a bad word



Reading Practicum

- Super grateful
- Hard
- Sacrifice vs. the one chance I have at reading -not a compromise.
- Benefits of reading

- District offered for Ms. Wilson to participate in a certification as a dyslexia specialist, chose Simon to work with 1:1.
- Beginning in 8th grade, Simon had a Learning Lab class on his schedule 1:1 with Ms. Wilson where we did explicit, evidence-based reading instruction.
- In 9th grade Simon continued going to the middle school during his 1st period (on his schedule) and Ms. Wilson used plan time for instruction.

Finish Practicum. Still have a way to go to reach skilled reader status.

Continue with practicum, reading instruction counts toward SPED minutes per district and IEP team

**9th
Grade**

**10th
Grade**

**11th
Grade**

**12th
Grade**

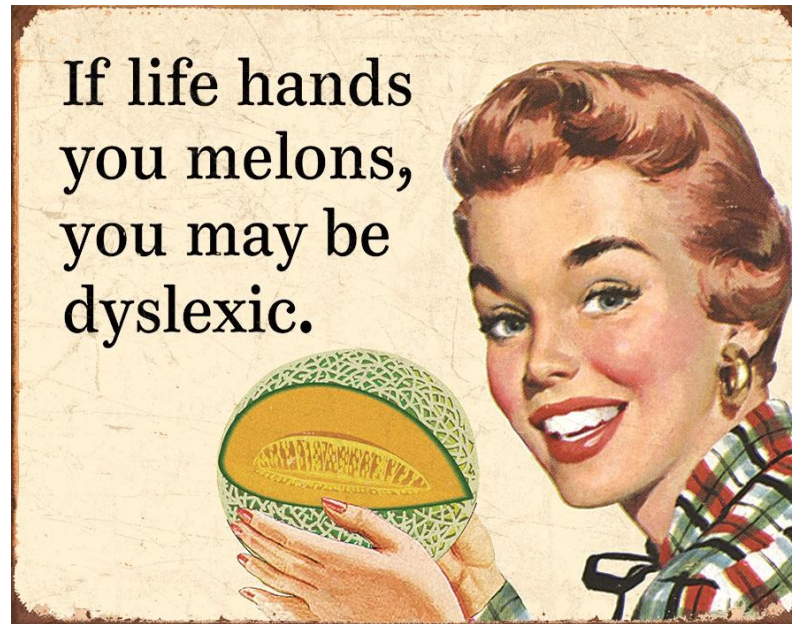
Almost there!

Learning Lab class on schedule. Class with case-manager, multiple other students. Homework help and test accommodations provided. It is a safe place to escape other frustrating parts of school

SIMON: High School Experiences

- Cold reading Shakespeare
- Mr. Bear (9th Grade S.S.)
- ASC My case manager was new to teaching, and was not a strong advocate for us.
 - Does not maintain discipline
- Spanish
- In December my Mom was diagnosed with terminal brain cancer. I was emotionally coping with that on top of teachers who didn't follow my IEP. Now I had to deal with them all on my own.

Supportive



*Image sent to Emily from S's mom
in 6th Grade*

What could we have done differently?

High School

- Reading instruction designed to IEP needs and goals.
- Some support with homework, but reading should be the priority.
- Backup with accommodations
- Balance between hand-holding and abandonment

So why do we still struggle to implement effective reading instruction?

- **MTSS systems not working well**
- Lack of accountability and support
- **Resistance -teachers or students**
- **Need consistency, but school is inconsistent** (schedules, calendar, etc.)

Teachers say...

- **It's "boring"**
- I don't know how
- **It's too slow**
- Scheduling *WIN
- **No effective phonics**
- Competing needs of students

SIMON: What I Wish My Teachers Knew

Be kind

I am NOT trying to get out of work, I am trying to access the information.

Students know what works for us and what is hard, and we succeed when we get to have a say.

Accommodations need to be followed and I need my case manager's help

*I wish I had better reading instruction sooner.
Right away*

We have to do what I need, not what I want in my special education class

- Multi-sensory -visuals, different colors, manipulatives.

We should be the team against the impacts of a disability, not us against each other.

-Simon S

IEP Team:

- When the student is at the center of the IEP process, then they have buy-in

Students must be included in the process from early on. They should be attending every meeting, even in primary grades if just for 10-15 minutes.

- Making sure classroom teachers understand the disability.

School needs to be:

- A place where teachers feel like they can ask for and are met with SUPPORT
- Growth needs to be the priority, NOT achievement

You might only have a student for a couple of years, and those years won't affect the rest of your life. Those years affect the student's life permanently.

-Simon S

Resources for Reading

[Dyslexia Handbook](#)

[Evidence-Based Reading Instruction for Grades K-5: \(Innovation Configuration\)](#)

[International Dyslexia Association](#)

[Fact Sheets \(International Dyslexia Association\)](#)

[Progress Monitoring Tools \(academic\)](#)

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