

## Corrective Reading and Dyslexia

Corrective Reading is used effectively with students who are struggling with reading, including students labelled "dyslexic," as having a learning disability, or having a cognitive impairment. The current thinking among leading researchers is that people fail to learn to read for a wide variety of reasons.

In broad strokes, researchers say that the reasons some people have difficulty developing basic reading skills are:

- 1) they have difficulty developing decoding skills,
- 2) they have difficulty developing language comprehension skills, or
- 3) both

Difficulties developing decoding skills very often arise from difficulties processing sounds in speech (phonological processing skills). Some people have an easier time than others breaking words apart and tuning into the subparts of spoken words.

Corrective Reading Decoding helps students understand that the letters in text represent the phonemes in speech. In independent research, Corrective Reading is very effective with students who have difficulty hearing and manipulating the phonemes and helping them make the connection between letters and phonemes.

One study that looked at this in detail found that students with very low initial phonological processing made at least equal progress to those with better phonological processing (although all students were initially well below the norm), indicating that the instruction found in Corrective Reading Decoding improves both phonemic awareness and decoding development.

While some children have difficulty developing decoding skills because of poor phonological processing skills, other children simply do not get adequate instruction in other necessary knowledge domains that are important for developing good decoding skills (such as knowledge of the alphabetical principle). Or they do not get ample opportunities to practice decoding real words in text, and thus fail to develop sufficient cipher knowledge about words. Corrective Reading Decoding provides the kind and intensive amount of practice that struggling readers need to develop their decoding skills and improve fluency.

Difficulty developing language comprehension skills often stem either from insufficient practice with the vocabulary and kinds of sentence structures often used in school and in academic practice. Corrective Reading Comprehension helps students develop a rich vocabulary and appreciation for semantics. It then helps them combine information about language with background information with an understanding of the mechanics of the language (syntax), thus providing what research shows to be the basis of comprehension.

Summaries of research are provided on our website. You will see Corrective Reading has a track record of improving group outcomes. But more and more researchers are asking about individual scores. If analysis focuses only upon group means, little information is available about students who make no progress or even regress. In a recent study done in Australia, 92% of the student placed in Corrective Reading improved in word attack by at least one standard deviation (a large effect). This means that only 8% of the very poorest readers in the schools studied (less than 2% of the general school population) did not improve by a full standard deviation. Even these students demonstrated learning at a faster rate than before achieved and affirms the general positive effects that one sees in other published research.

In *Overcoming Dyslexia*, Dr. Sally Shaywitz draws on recent scientific breakthroughs to provide a state-of-the-art discussion of dyslexia. The book makes it clear how the latest research, including new brain imaging studies, is uncovering the mechanisms underlying dyslexia and recommends effective treatments. Corrective Reading is recommended for older students who have failed to master the earliest reading skills (See pages 263 and 264).

Corrective Reading was identified by Dr. Saywitz as an effective research-based programme because it incorporates features that are essential elements for teaching students with dyslexic. Specifically, Corrective Reading:

- 1) Addresses the phonological weakness that blocks decoding and, in turn, interferes with word identification. It teaches phonemic awareness through segmenting, blending, and rhyming, helping students to notice and code each of the parts within a word while increasing their ability to store bits of verbal information.
- 2) It builds a storehouse of letter and word representations by teaching phonics explicitly and systematically. Corrective Reading teaches students in a way that empowers them to try to analyze and sound out an unknown word rather than guess from the pictures or context.
- 3) It includes many opportunities to develop fluency, the ability to read accurately, quickly, smoothly. Fluency forms the bridge between decoding and comprehension, and children acquire fluency by repeated exposures to a word that they are pronouncing correctly. While accuracy is a necessary precursor to fluency, accuracy does not necessarily evolve into fluency. Corrective Reading builds fluency through lesson procedures that
  - Focus on a student's oral reading,
  - Include opportunities to practice words in isolation and with connected text (reading sentences, stories, and books), and
  - Provide ongoing feedback as the student reads.
- 4) The instructional sequence found in Corrective Reading progresses from sounds to words to stories, all the while supporting children with ample practice—a procedure consistent with what is known about neural circuits that are reinforced and strengthened through practice
- 5) Corrective Reading provides both the direct instruction and rich reading experiences disabled readers need to build vocabulary and to develop reading comprehension strategies.
- 6) Finally, Corrective Reading provides intense instruction that is more finely calibrated and more explicit than other programmes. Scripted lesson plans provide for high-quality instruction which resonates back and forth between teacher and student. The teacher is constantly delivering the necessary knowledge and gaining the student's attention, asking questions, keeping the student actively involved. At the same time, they are responsive to the student's unique needs, slowing down, repeating, speeding up, or changing pace based on their interaction with students.

To summarise, the instructional content and design of Corrective Reading is consistent with scientifically based reading research and with what is known about the treatment of dyslexia and other reading disabilities at this time.