

The Science of Reading vs Structured Literacy

What's the difference?

A Statement from the International Dyslexia Association - Oregon Branch

What is the Science of Reading?

The science of reading, sometimes known as SOR, is the vast research that has been done in the last 40+ years about how people read, how students learn to read, what causes some students to struggle to learn to read, and how to teach students to learn to read. Cognitive psychologists, neuropsychologists, and other researchers have conducted this research in labs and classrooms, and more research is being done every year. The big picture about this research is that reading involves mastering five distinct skills: 1) phonological awareness, 2) phonics, 3) fluency, 4) vocabulary, and 5) comprehension. The research is robust and has been conducted all over the world.

Two of the challenges we face are that this large body of research is not included in most teacher training programs, and it is not used to develop a lot of the commonly used reading curricula in schools.

What is Structured Literacy?

Structured Literacy is a way to teach all students, including students with dyslexia and other reading challenges, how to learn to read. The method is systematic and cumulative, explicit, and diagnostic. It covers all the essential reading skills, including word identification and decoding strategies. Although it does not cover every part of the Science of Reading, what it does cover is based on the Science of Reading.

What are IDA's Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading (KPS)?

The KPS define the knowledge and skills that all teachers of reading should possess to teach all students to read proficiently. IDA uses the KPS in their university and teacher training accreditation work to ensure that these programs are effectively preparing teachers to apply the Science of Reading and Structured Literacy in their classrooms.

Why does this matter?

The Science of Reading, Structured Literacy, and IDA's KPS are important because they offer research, standards, and a framework for teaching all students, including students with dyslexia, how to read.