

Dyslexia is part of the overall reading conversation!

For many education professionals, dyslexia awareness, in the context of overall reading performance, is steadily growing across school districts.



Our reading tools are organized around key functions of your work: screening, assessment, intervention/instruction, and progress monitoring. These distinct functions, crafted into an efficient process and delivered expertly, provide teachers and students with the best possible outcomes. See some examples of our tools below:

Screen. aimsweb®Plus features skill-based measures and a robust underlying data set that contribute to reading success, along with Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen®, an evidence-based screener for students at risk for dyslexia.

Intervene. SPELL-Links Class Links for Classrooms delivers high-quality, hands-on instruction to structured literacy goals.

Assess. Developmental Reading Assessment™, Third Edition (DRA™3) analyzes oral reading and reading comprehension providing a deeper understanding of students areas of strength as well as their instructional needs.

Monitor. aimswebPlus and DRA3 provide a complete, ongoing view of a student's reading skills and developing reading behaviours.

How might these tools work together? Here's one example:

- Step 1** Use aimswebPlus to screen for overall reading skills and skill development.
- Step 2** Use Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen to screen for dyslexia risk.
- Step 3** Use DRA3 to observe and guide students through personalized reading skill development.
- Step 4** Use SPELL-Links Class Links for Classrooms to empower students to independently apply structured literacy strategies to reading, writing, and spelling every day.
- Step 5** Come full circle back to aimswebPlus or DRA3 for progress monitoring.

Used by both Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen and DRA3, teacher observations have been shown to contribute valid information about student performance, especially when combined with clinical and classroom assessments (Gallant, 2017; Snowling et al., 2011; Wood-Groves & Choi, 2017). By contrast, aimswebPlus uses direct assessment of student performance as a complementary means of understanding and planning for reading instruction.



How might this look in your district?

Here's how aimswebPlus, DRA3, and the Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen can be used universally and/or in targeted ways by education professionals working in school districts across the country.

Story 1: All students, all views

In this scenario, K–5 teachers administer aimswebPlus to all of their students in the fall, establishing a baseline of student performance. The administrators and teachers use those data points across classrooms in the beginning of the year to identify students at risk of not meeting their spring targets. After six to eight weeks of instruction, all K–3 students are administered the Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen, integrated within aimswebPlus. So easy! This fulfills the new state mandate for universal dyslexia screening and offers access to the Aggregate Risk Report—setting aimswebPlus and Shaywitz data side-by-side for the same students. For students at risk on both aimswebPlus and Shaywitz, teachers and administrators know to “drop everything” and immediately begin more intensive interventions. For students at risk on one or the other, teachers can investigate further about each group of students with RTI/MTSS team members to explore the best way to address these students’ needs, which may be the same or slightly different from those students at risk on both measures. Looking at every student in the fall gives a comprehensive view and allows “what’s next?” discussions to happen for each subgroup of students.

Meanwhile, teachers are also working through each student’s DRA3 profile as school begins. Individual time looking at reading behaviours gives the teacher powerful insights to classroom instruction and differentiation needs. Using the DRA3 as a benchmark in reading performance helps to not only determine independent and instructional levels for every student, but also helps teachers personalize instruction, create small groups according to skill level, and identify children in need of more support.

With this comprehensive start to the year for all students, education teams harness aimswebPlus and DRA3 to monitor progress and ensure that at-risk students are responding to individualized interventions throughout the year. They also can use these tools to assess whether their core curriculum is effective.

Throughout the year, data can be collected frequently and analyzed on an ongoing basis. Key reports, based on the audience, can be provided during parent-teacher conferences and administrative meetings. Even better, goals and interventions can be adapted as needed!

References

- Gallant, D. J. (2017). Using first-grade teacher ratings to predict third-grade english language arts and mathematics achievement on a high-stakes statewide assessment. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 5(2), 125-142.
- Snowling, M. J., Duff, F., Petrou, A., Schiffeldrin, J., & Bailey, A. M. (2011). Identification of children at risk of dyslexia: the validity of teacher judgements using ‘Phonic Phases’. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 34(2), 157-170.
- Woods–Groves, S., & Choi, T. (2017). Relationship of teachers’ ratings of kindergarteners’ 21st century skills and student performance. *Psychology in the Schools*, 54(9), 1034-1048.