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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.

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.

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

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.

Screen

Assess

Intervene

Monitor

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 3: A "root cause analysis" approach

In this scenario, K–3 teachers administer DRA3 to all of their students in the fall to establish a baseline of student reading behaviours. From these assessment data details, they plan interventions in the classroom, place students in initial reading groups, and use DRA3 in the context of the general education reading curriculum.

Unfortunately, some students do not make progress in reading or advance through DRA levels. What is happening for each of these struggling readers? Professionals know the importance of getting to the root cause of a problem, so at this point administrators and teachers go "under the hood" to understand how individual skills may or may not be contributing to each student's reading difficulties.

The teachers now administer the appropriate aimswebPlus benchmarks to the students who have fallen behind expectations in reading level and classroom curriculum progress. They also administer the Shaywitz DyslexiaScreen to this same group to evaluate the risk of dyslexia. This process also offers access to the Aggregate Risk Report—setting aimswebPlus and Shaywitz data side-by-side for the same students.

So, what's next? Using the "under-the-hood" data, the education team can identify more clearly where the students are struggling with the integrated reading task. This allows re-grouping of students with similar underlying difficulties and/or a more intensive, explicit classroom-wide approach to reading instruction, such as SPELL-Links Class Links for Classrooms supplemental word study program. Whether used with a whole classroom (perhaps in place of an existing spelling curriculum) or with small groups of struggling readers, a strong program acknowledges the interplay of reading, writing, and spelling as students learn to master sounds, letters, and words.

The power of getting to the crux of the issue for any particular student lies heavily in accurate data interpretation, an understanding of the reading science, and the team's experience with a vast number of students. The iterative nature of screening and benchmarking through the year works, as long as the team takes the time to review the data and take decisive action.

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.

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