



Knowledge and Practice Standards **for Teachers of Reading**

What are the IDA *Knowledge and Practice Standards*?

The IDA *Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading* (Knowledge and Practice Standards) provide a comprehensive research-based framework that articulates what all reading teachers and specialists should know and be able to demonstrate to teach reading successfully to all students. The focus of the *Knowledge and Practice Standards* is the structure of language and its component systems, their connections to design and delivery of instruction, and the complex nature of skilled reading. Such knowledge is critical in teaching those with dyslexia and other struggling readers, but all students can benefit from the Structured Literacy approach.

These standards are both broad based and detailed in nature. Section I addresses the specialized knowledge teachers should use when teaching reading, including Foundation Concepts about Oral and Written Language; Knowledge of Language Structure; Knowledge of Dyslexia and Other Learning Disorders; Administration and Interpretation of Assessments; The Principles of Structured Language Teaching; and Ethical Standards for the Profession. These areas outline content knowledge, practical applications, and observable competencies. Section II addresses the effective implementation of evidence-based practices and provides guidelines for the supervised practice of teachers and specialists of students with reading disabilities or dyslexia who work in varied educational settings. Extensive references that support each standard can be found at the end of the document.

The *Knowledge and Practice Standards* have application for general educators and dyslexia specialists in the United States and

internationally. Narrative introductions provide a unique description for each educator group and for global partners and are available from www.interdys.org (the IDA website).

Who developed the *Knowledge and Practice Standards*?

Louisa Moats, a well-known expert in the reading field and former member of the IDA Board of Directors, spearheaded the compilation of the *Knowledge and Practice Standards*, chairing a committee of experts that included Suzanne Carreker, Rosalie Davis, Phyllis Meisel, Louise Spear-Swerling, and Barbara Wilson. In the fall of 2010, the IDA Board of Directors adopted these standards. The Professional Development Committee of IDA, chaired by a member of the IDA Board and overseen by IDA's Director of Professional Development, is charged with implementing the *Knowledge and Practice Standards* through various strategic initiatives.

Why were the *Knowledge and Practice Standards* created?

Teaching reading effectively requires considerable knowledge and skill. In a time of increased focus on standards for student achievement, such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), this and other standards documents have not defined exactly what educators need to know to deliver informed instruction. The IDA *Knowledge and Practice Standards* fill a crucial need by comprehensively addressing the nature of effective teaching of reading, optimal educational settings, and qualifications of educators who design and deliver reading instruction, particularly for students with dyslexia and other struggling students.

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IDA recognizes and applauds the work of other professional organizations, including the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and the International Reading Association (IRA), who have also published standards. However, none of these addresses, in detail, the foundational structure of language and specifically what teachers should know and be able to do as they differentiate instruction for all readers, including those with dyslexia and other struggling students.

How is IDA using the *Knowledge and Practice Standards*?

While the potential uses of the IDA *Knowledge and Practice Standards* document are broad and dynamic in nature, a major goal is to guide the preparation and professional development of those who teach reading and related literacy skills in classroom, remedial, and clinical settings.

Currently, the IDA *Knowledge and Practice Standards* are at the heart of one of IDA's most important strategic initiatives: to change the way teachers are prepared to teach in our universities and colleges. IDA has designed a multi-tiered accreditation process based upon these standards to review teacher preparation programs for general classroom teachers or dyslexia specialists, according to *Knowledge and Practice Standards*. The practicum requirements and qualifications of instructors determine the level(s) of accreditation. Additionally, IDA is developing an exam to certify individuals at these different levels depending upon the accredited program level that they complete. Using the IDA *Knowledge and Practice Standards* as the framework for course content and curricula, teams of reading experts began reviewing university teacher preparation programs in 2012, resulting in nine programs recognized for their alignment with the IDA *Knowledge and Practice Standards*. An additional eight programs were accredited in 2014.

Reviews are completely voluntary on the part of the universities. University programs that have undergone this process report several benefits:

increased knowledge of evidence-based practices in reading instruction by faculty and teacher candidates, improved program alignment and promotion, and increased student enrollment. University programs are encouraged to submit applications for accreditation at the general educator or dyslexia specialist level.

In addition to the university-based teacher preparation programs in reading, IDA has reviewed independent teacher training programs, such as those accredited through the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC). All of these accredited programs can be found on the IDA website.

The IDA *Knowledge and Practice Standards* may also be used to identify the necessary components of a high quality instructional reading program and setting or to help parents select and advocate for good teaching methods and educational environments for their children.

Through these efforts, IDA is focused on creating a wider dialogue and, ultimately, working with education policymakers and educators to change the way teachers are trained to teach reading. Whether a teacher works in a general education or special education setting, public or private school, with dyslexics, struggling readers or skilled readers, *all* teachers need to be trained in the science of reading to improve the outcomes for *all* students.

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