

Making Informed Instructional Decisions



CHRONICLES FROM THE CLASSROOM



Teachers Must Be Critical Thinkers and Informed Consumers

Margie B. Gillis, Ed.D., *Feature Writer, International Dyslexia Association Examiner*

Simply put, I believe that it is the teacher, not the program, who teaches the child to read. A skilled teacher can take a weak program or a poorly written activity and make it work. Conversely, an inexperienced and uninformed teacher can be handed an excellent program or a tried-and-true set of materials and use them ineffectively.

Here is what I recommend.

- Teachers should be encouraged to see themselves as **critical thinkers**. They, along with their students, are the **integral consumers** of educational practices.
- To be critical consumers, teachers must be actively engaged in the process of making informed decisions. This requires **deep content knowledge of language structures**—as well as the **knowledge of the reading process** itself.

- Most importantly, teachers should **receive support** from their school and district administrators to ensure that they are using the tools that have been selected to teach reading most effectively.

Our children—especially those most vulnerable due to dyslexia and other learning challenges—must be taught by teachers who are not only knowledgeable and experienced **but who are also thinkers—well-supported as they critically consume the materials they select and use.**

Excerpted from the forthcoming *IDA Examiner*. Dr. Gillis serves on the Editorial Board of IDA's *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*. Subscriptions to these publications are among the many benefits of [IDA membership](#).

Anne E. Fowler Fellowship in the Reading & Language Development Program



Now Recruiting for Fall 2018

The Anne E. Fowler Fellowship in the Reading and Language Development Program at Fairfield University, is designed to empower and support candidates who are pursuing #102 Certification, Master's and Sixth Year Degrees.

The program was developed to significantly raise literacy levels among low-performing elementary school populations, including those students with SLD/Dyslexia, and has been endorsed by the International Dyslexia Association. This program prepares certified teachers to become classroom experts in scientific research-based literacy instruction.

Dr. Gillis established the Anne E. Fowler Foundation and Fellowship to help address gaps in teacher knowledge and to provide the expert support—through a supervised practicum—that most teachers need. (See above!) Reading and Language Development Program candidates who work in an urban or priority school district are eligible to apply to the Fellowship.

As a Fellow, you will:

- engage in a year-long sabbatical to deepen your understanding of comprehensive literacy instruction
- receive a generous tuition stipend
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- work with Literacy How Mentors, Fellowship partners specializing in comprehensive, research-based professional development and classroom-embedded coaching
- receive other benefits designed to improve your teaching practice (e.g. professional memberships with the International Literacy Association and the International Dyslexia Association; access to specialized professional development workshops and institutes).

Learn more and apply. Contact the Fellowship Director at sgonzalez@Fairfield.edu or visit our [website](#). *Please help us spread the word about this highly selective opportunity!*



About 80% of individuals diagnosed with learning disabilities, will have difficulty with various aspects of reading.

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Structured Literacy benefits all students, but is essential for those with SLD/Dyslexia. We will be offering the 30-hr series from Monday, June 25 through Friday, June 29, 2018. All five sessions are required. [Learn more](#).

Participants will be able to:

- Describe the warning signs of Dyslexia and list several assessments that can be used both for identification and monitoring students' progress.
- Summarize the six elements of language, including phonology, orthography, morphology, syntax, and semantics and describe several ways that these elements can be integrated into lessons using a *Structured Literacy* approach.
- Practice developing and delivering lessons that incorporate these six elements and the principles of instruction that are associated with *Structured Literacy*—that is, systematic, explicit, cumulative to mastery, diagnostic, and prescriptive.
- Deliver lessons using strategies and techniques learned throughout the course and with frequent practice, should see improvement in students' word recognition skills.
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