

# INTRODUCTION:

## VOICES FROM THE FIELD

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**Sharon Vaughn:** By definition, a struggling reader is behind; that is, they're not reading on grade level.

**Lisa McCulley:** The students that turned out to have fluency troubles were not necessarily the students I would have predicted.

**Anita Harbor:** Frequently, middle school teachers who have students who struggle with reading approach the problem by avoiding reading altogether.

**Brandi Hendrix:** Instead of figuring out how to sound out the word, the students were instructed by their teachers to just skip the words that they didn't know.

**Christine Laderbush:** That student just continues to fall behind more and more because vocabulary is so important when you get to the secondary level.

**Steven Ciullo:** And ultimately, the long-term result could be more difficulty with high school graduation and their long-term outcomes could be affected because in college and in the workforce, students are expected to read a wide variety of material for understanding.

**Sharon Vaughn:** When you're working on phonics elements, learning to hear the sounds and see them, and read the words is an important reading connection. But also learning to hear the sounds and write them is an important connection for remembering those phonics elements and remembering those words.

**Steven Ciullo:** Without equipping them with the tools to do that early on, it's going to set them at a significant disadvantage.

**Anita Harbor:** Middle school teachers can really have a hard time with struggling readers because they don't know how to teach strategies. They don't know what strategies are out there.

**Colleen Reutebuch:** Research shows that explicit instruction is effective for improving the achievement of all students.

- Steven Ciullo:** An oral reading fluency assessment can give teachers a snapshot of where that student is currently, as far as their ability to read a passage fluently in a given amount of time.
- Rebecca Tuesta:** Based on where they're at, we really use that data to figure out a solution.
- Sharon Vaughn:** We need to organize our reading instruction in explicit, systematic ways to capitalize on what they know, to extend what they know, and to assure rapid progress.
- Rebecca Tuesta:** A lot of times, these students have been struggling for so long with literacy that they often become very frustrated easily.
- Brandi Hendrix:** They hate to read so much that when you give them an assignment, they're reading just to finish the assignment. They're not reading for meaning.
- Alejandra Ortiz:** If you get a material that is very engaging to them, they will enjoy the reading.
- Brandi Hendrix:** I think what helps kids the most is when they have repeated practice on picking out prefixes, suffixes, stems, word parts; and they practice that over and over; and they start recognizing that. And then as they're reading, they have a five-syllable word and they might not know what the word is, but they can pronounce parts of it and so they can put it together and make it a real word. And then they're thinking, "Oh, my gosh! I just read that big word!" and they get all excited, and they start being successful, and then it carries over to all of their classes.
- Anita Harbor:** Decoding is that initial set of skills that you have to have in order to read.
- Sharon Vaughn:** If you can't look at the word and cipher what it says, you can't get to meaning.
- Alejandra Ortiz:** Once they know how to target a word, and once they know how to decode a word, and they practice reading that, and they ... with practice, they realize that it becomes easier and easier for them to read, they will have the fluency. And then they can variously have the comprehension.
- Sharon Vaughn:** A schoolwide approach to literacy is the approach that is likely to be most beneficial.
- Greg Roberts:** Collaboration amongst teachers is a good thing.

- Alejandra Ortiz:** Every classroom, every teacher is utilizing the same strategies, the same instructional routines, so students really know, have ownership of those instructional routines. They know what to do when they encounter a word that they don't understand.
- Sharon Vaughn:** So while we think of these components like decoding, fluency, and comprehension as being unique and important, and maybe in some ways separate, it's also important to think about how they relate to each other and how you get an acceleration in each of them by increasing capacity and knowledge of each one separately.
- Rebecca Tuesta:** I get so excited when I see a student who has been in my classroom and used all these methods that we do every day in class, like phonics and decoding, and see them really feel confident in their abilities to the point that they want to share it with the other students and read out loud.
- Greg Roberts:** It turns out that a lot of the strategies that are effective and useful for helping kids comprehend text are also helpful and useful for helping kids organize content, however it's accessed.
- Steven Ciullo:** The ultimate goal of reading is reading comprehension, or to read for understanding.
- Anita Harbor:** Struggling adolescent readers really need to realize that they have a toolbox of strategies that's available to them when they struggle with reading.
- Sharon Vaughn:** Reading provides access to friends, to family, and to the future.