



Title: Bringing Speech-to Print-Instruction into the Classroom

Small Changes = Big Impact

Audience: All K-12 educators

Course Description:

Our brains are biologically wired for oral language, not written language. If our brains are wired for oral language, for listening and speaking, shouldn't reading and writing instruction begin there? The answer is yes, but traditional reading programs don't leverage the biological wiring and organization of the brain. Instead, these programs begin with the written letter and teach the student to match the letter to a sound, an approach called decoding or "print to speech".

A "speech-to-print" approach puts spoken language first to leverage the brain's innate, biological wiring and organization for oral language. With "speech to print", spelling is the gateway through which students learn how to read and write. Students first learn how to attend to the sound structure of spoken English words and then how to connect and combine sounds, letter patterns, and meanings to read and spell words. This is exactly how the brain works in good readers and writers and current reading science research, including brain-imaging studies, shows strong gains in reading and writing performance and added academic benefits for students receiving speech-to-print instruction vs. print-to-speech instruction.

All students – and especially students who have or are at high-risk for reading and writing problems – can benefit from speech-to-print instruction. When used within a multi-linguistic "Connectionist Model" framework, speech-to-print instructional activities build the reading and writing brain by developing, connecting, and integrating the different processes and regions of the brain involved in effective reading and writing. This multi-linguistic approach is critical because learning to read and write isn't just about acquiring isolated sets of knowledge and skills – it's about establishing neural pathways and developing "functional connectivity" within the brain.



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Whether you're a classroom teacher, classroom aide, literacy coach or consultant, or interventionist this course will empower you with specific, easy and practical ideas that can have a large impact on students' reading and spelling learning and performance. From word walls to word sorts to word study/spelling homework, you'll see how easy it is to make these everyday teaching practices more effective by giving them a speech-to-print, Connectionist Model "tweak". You'll gain confidence in your ability to share simple yet powerful recommendations with colleagues, students, and parents and to make changes in your own practice...changes that leverage the biological wiring of the brain and integrate all linguistic components of word study.... the sounds (phonological awareness), the letters (orthography), and the meanings (vocabulary and morphology) of English words. You'll leave with practical ideas that you can immediately put into action....and immediately observe positive response with your students. This course is NOT just for classroom teachers...it's for ANY education professional who wants to make small changes that will have a big impact on students' reading and writing performance, regardless of educational setting or learning environment.

Key Benefits of Attending:

1. *Understand the rationale and research-documented benefits of speech-to-print instruction.* Once you better understand the rationale and research-documented benefits, you'll feel more confident and empowered to share simple yet powerful recommendations with colleagues, students, and parents – and to make changes in your own practice.
2. *Gain insights and leave with easy, practical ideas for modifying in-class and homework activities to make them more effective for students.* You'll see how easy it is to "tweak" word walls, word sorts, journal writing, and word study/spelling homework activities by infusing these everyday activities with speech-to-print, Connectionist methods of instruction to maximize their instructional value.



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Learning Objectives:

1. Explain the basics of brain-based models of written language development, the differences between traditional developmental, Stage models and current multi-linguistic, Connectionist models of word study instruction and intervention, the rationale for using a speech-to-print (vs. print-to-speech) approach to instruction and intervention, and the benefits of speech-to-print instruction reported in the research.
2. Evaluate common teaching practices, including word walls, word sorts, and word study/spelling homework activities from a speech-to-print, Connectionist Model perspective to identify short-comings and simple ways to make these everyday teaching practices more effective.

