CT Literacy Conference

Welcome to the Connecticut Literacy Conference

CONNECTICUT Education

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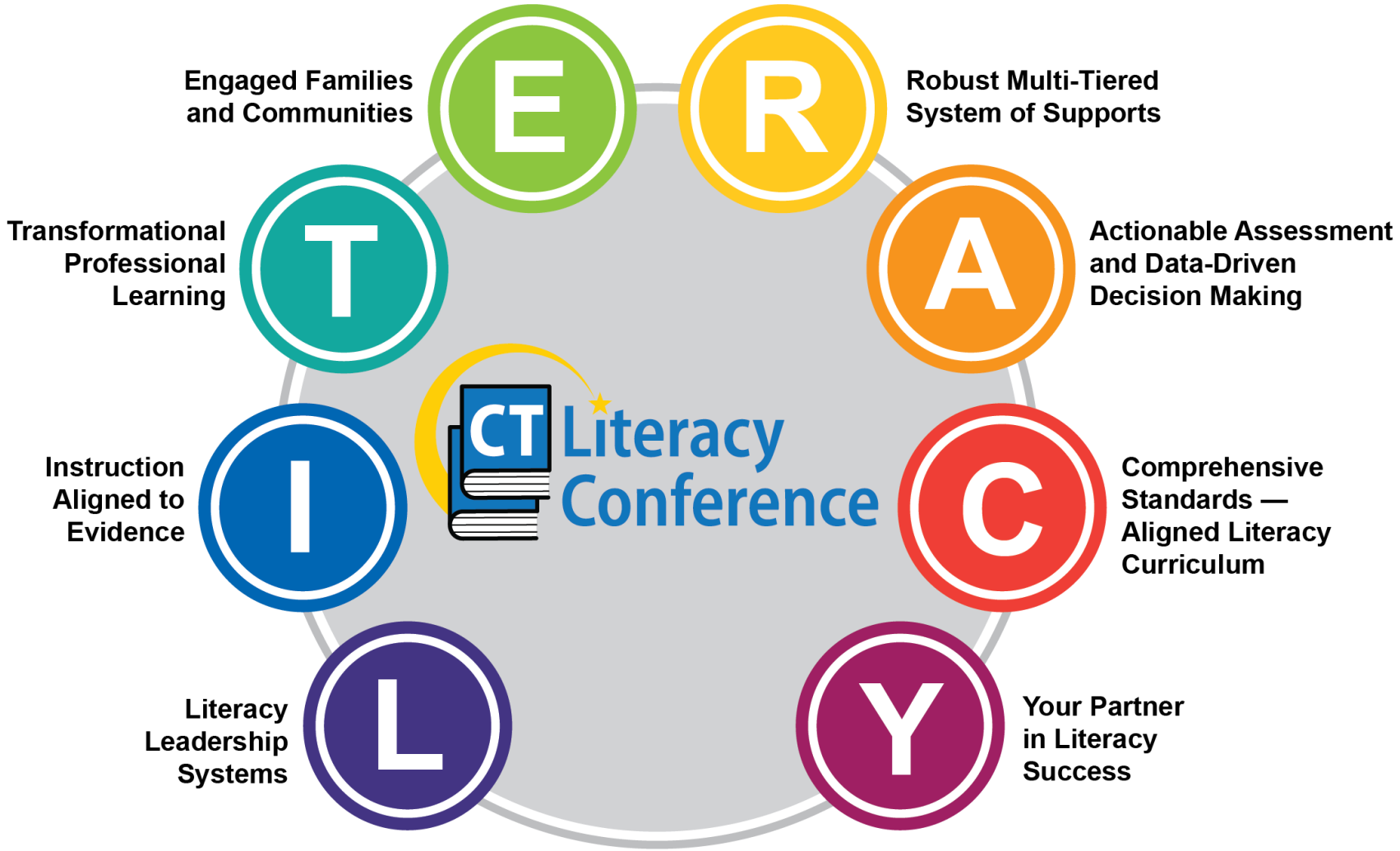
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From Competencies to Collaboration:

Connecting Educator Roles in Structured Literacy and Dyslexia

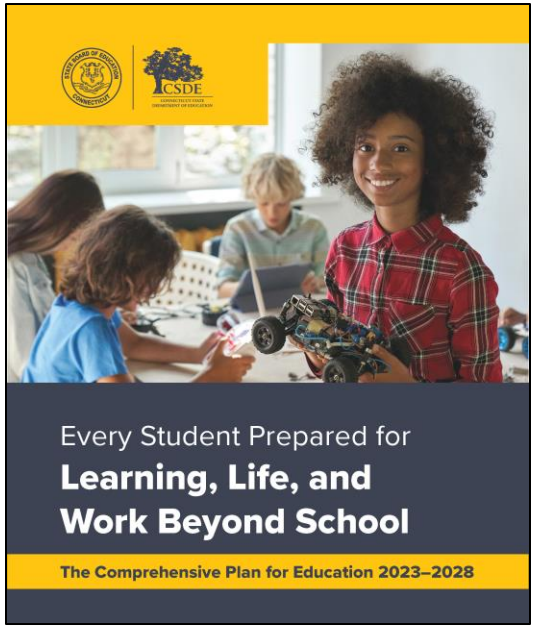
Kristin Allen, Lisa Gianni, Cherie Kent, Dr. Dena Mortensen

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Engaged Families and Communities
E
Robust Multi-Tiered System of Supports
R
Transformational Professional Learning
T
Actionable Assessment and Data-Driven Decision Making
A
CT Literacy Conference
Instruction Aligned to Evidence
I
Comprehensive Standards — Aligned Literacy Curriculum
C
Literacy Leadership Systems
L
Your Partner in Literacy Success
Y

Every Student Prepared for Learning, Life, and Work Beyond School:

State Board of Education Comprehensive Plan (2023-2028)



Ensure Equitable Access to Education

All learners are supported, including those with high needs, and have equitable access to education regardless of background or advantage, including access to great teachers and leaders, and a diverse educational workforce.

Ensure Safe and Healthy Learning Environments

Learning spaces are safe, compassionate, and culturally responsive. They are designed to support the academic, physical, and social-emotional well-being of all learners, including learners of color, multilingual learners, those with a disability, learners experiencing food and housing insecurities, learners coming from low-income families, and those who identify as LGBTQ.

Elevate Curriculum Frameworks

Elevate Connecticut's curriculum frameworks to provide support for the development of rigorous, engaging instruction and the reliable assessment of universally required skills for life beyond school and a lifelong love of learning.

Create Multiple Career Pathways

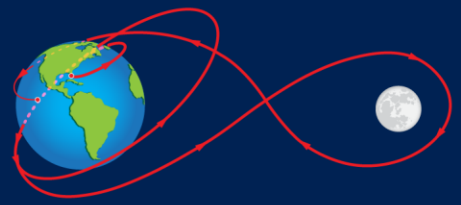
Create opportunities for all students to explore multiple career pathways through coordinated and rigorous programs that are developed in partnership with institutions of higher education and local/regional employers, and that align to economic opportunity and advance students in careers of their choice.

CSDE Strategic Focus Areas

Every Student Prepared for Learning, Life, and Work Beyond School

- Expand our Educator Workforce
- Support Safe and Healthy Learning Environments
- Ensure Students are Present and Engaged
- Elevate and Support High Quality Instructional Materials
- Modernize and Expand Post-Secondary Pathways
- Improve Outcomes for All Students, including Students with Varying Abilities
- Strengthen and Promote School, Family, and Community Partnerships

CONNECTICUT'S MISSION:
EMPOWER EVERY LEARNER'S JOURNEY



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From Competencies to Collaboration:

Connecting Educator Roles in Structured Literacy and Dyslexia

What This Session Is About

A practical look at how the competencies connect educator roles, existing practice, and collaboration.

1 Understand

See the competencies as both a shared foundation and role-specific depth in literacy knowledge and practice.

2 Connect

Identify where the competencies already show up in instruction, assessment, intervention, and professional learning.

3 Collaborate

Clarify what you bring, what colleagues bring, and when student needs call for additional or more specialized expertise.

Goal: leave with one concrete connection you can bring back to your school or district.

Connecting the Competencies to the Work We Already Do

The competencies support Connecticut's goals for literacy achievement and the K-12 Literacy Strategy.

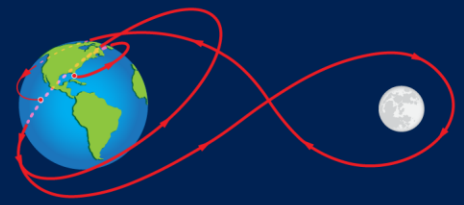
What the Competencies May Seem Like

- Focused on primarily dyslexia or reading disabilities
- Intended primarily for educator preparation or beginning teachers
- Most relevant to elementary teachers
- Another initiative or set of requirements to implement

A More Complete Picture

- A description of what educators should know and be able to do to deliver evidence-aligned literacy instruction
- Relevant across educator roles, with different levels of depth and specialization
- Spans grade levels and supports HQIM, screening and assessment, intervention, and professional learning
- A way to clarify shared expertise, role-specific expertise, and collaboration

How can the competencies strengthen and connect what we already do?



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Understanding the Educator Competencies

How the Competencies Support Differentiated Knowledge and Practice

Differentiated Structured Literacy Knowledge and Practices

Core Foundational Knowledge

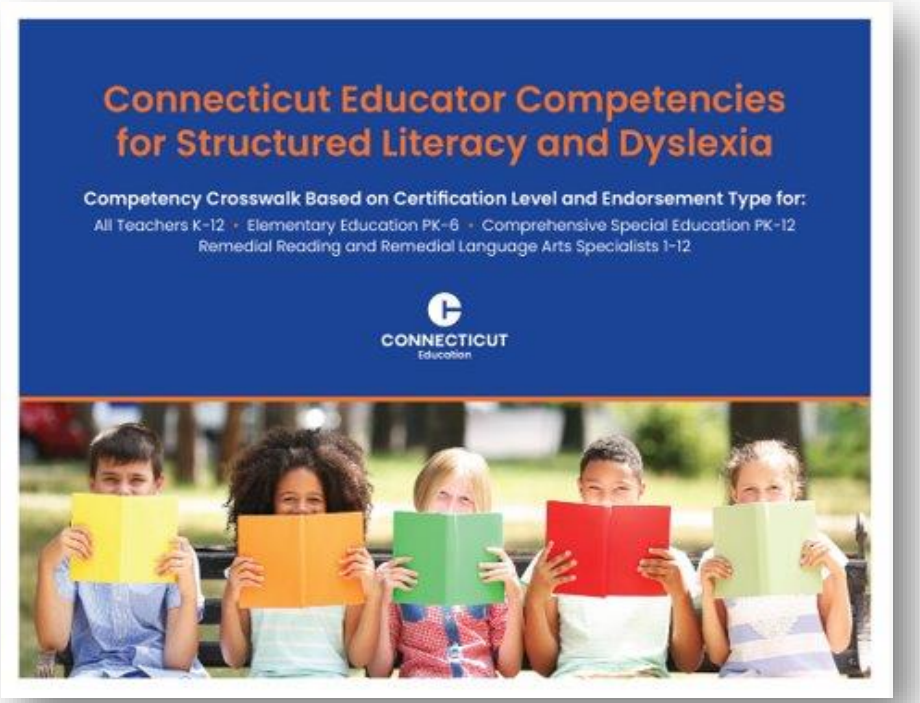
Competencies 1–6

- Addresses typical and atypical literacy development

Structured Literacy Practices

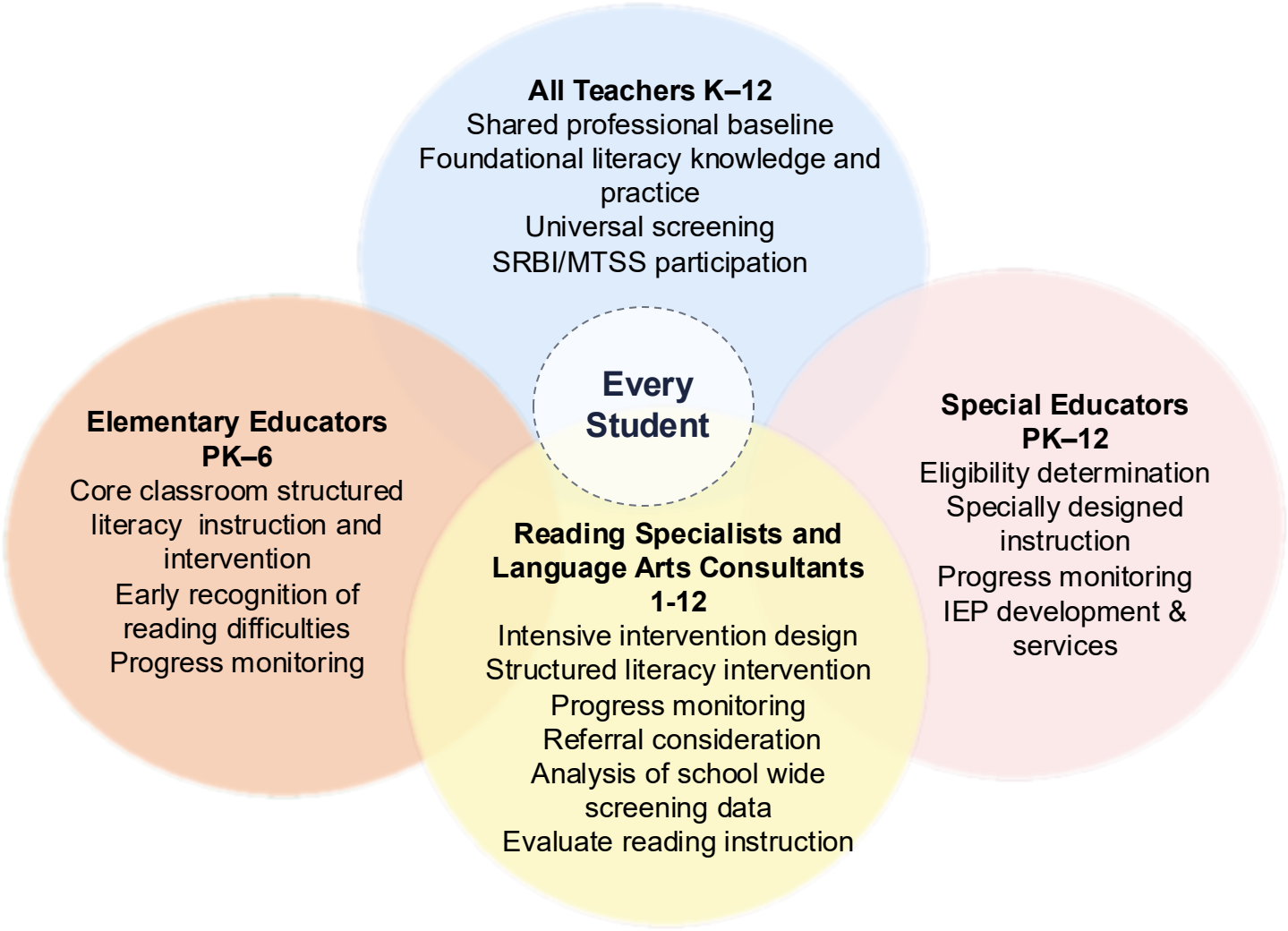
Competencies 7–12

- Addresses the principles and practices of structured literacy instruction and intervention



Every teacher prepared for their specific role in a child's literacy development

What is essential for students with dyslexia is effective for all learners



How the Competencies Encourage Collaborative Problem-Solving

Dyslexia Competencies 5.4K and 5.9K:

5.4K: Explain how and why symptoms of reading difficulty are likely to change over time in response to development and instruction.
5.9K: Explain the consequences of a lack of timely identification and appropriately intensive and adequately comprehensive interventions.

What do these competencies allow the team to ask:

What does the student's instructional history and response to instruction tell us about the pattern we are seeing? How has that pattern changed over time in response to development, instruction, and intervention?

What do these competencies help guard against:

Either dismissing the data (“The instruction was inconsistent, so none of this counts.") or over-weighting it (“This student was already struggling, so this confirms a disability.").

Why does this knowledge need to be shared across the team:

Classroom teachers, reading specialists, special educators, building leaders, and other team members need this knowledge to systematically examine instructional opportunity, interpret response to instruction, and recognize when patterns are not changing as expected.

What Educators Told Us

Professional Learning Experiences, Needs, and Preferences

Variation in Prior and Current Learning

- Variation in structured literacy training and experience
- Differences across roles regarding reported knowledge and application

Priorities for Continued Learning

- Assessment and progress monitoring
- Application of structured literacy in content areas
- Differentiation for varied learning needs

Preferred Learning Supports

- Job-embedded coaching
- Blended learning and self-paced learning
- Resources, refreshers, and collaborative support

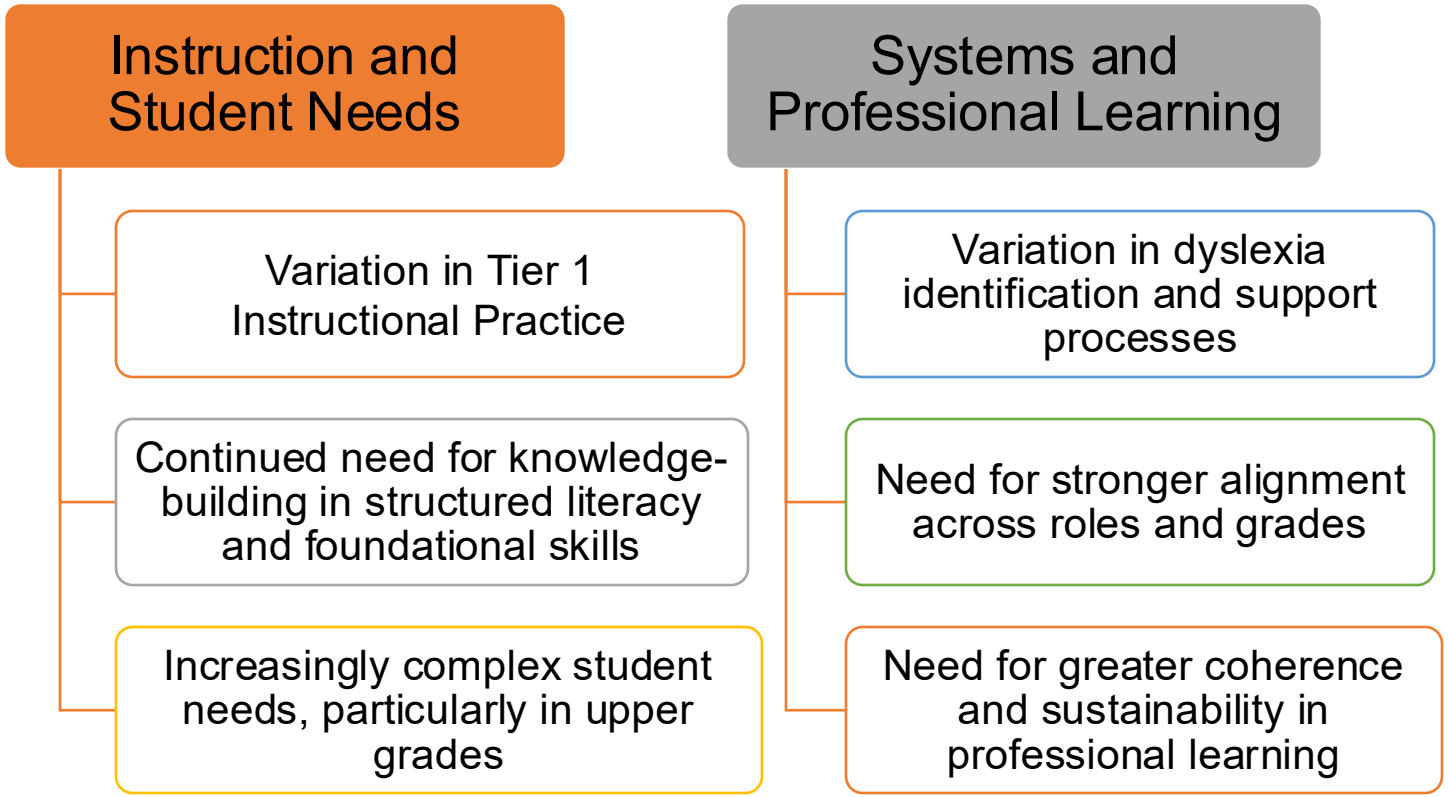
Focus on Application

- Applying learning to instructional practice
- Supporting varied student needs
- Improving outcomes for students

Source: ODRD Professional Learning Needs Survey, Spring 2025, 500+ responses

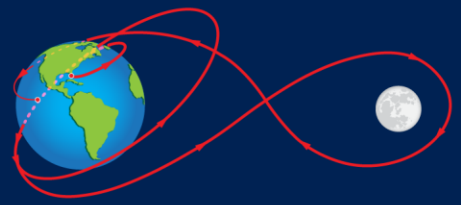
What We Heard From District Leaders

Themes from June 2026 Focus Groups: Structured Literacy Professional Learning Framework and Implementation



What Leaders Emphasized for Implementation

Practical, application-focused learning, tools, and support



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From Understanding to Application

Applying the Competencies Through Collaborative Problem-Solving

Connecting the Competencies to District Practice

The competencies help educators connect professional knowledge to the materials, data, and systems they use every day.

COMPETENCIES

What educators know and can do

HQIM + INSTRUCTION

Use evidence-aligned materials and routines with integrity. Apply professional knowledge and judgment to respond to the students in front of you.

UNIVERSAL SCREENING + ASSESSMENT

Use screening and other assessment data to identify risk, look across measures and patterns, and determine what instruction or additional information is needed next.

Together: stronger decisions about instruction, intervention, progress monitoring, and collaboration

The competencies are not a curriculum or a screener; they are the knowledge and skills that help educators use those tools effectively.

Activity: “What Do I Bring to the Team?”

Together, you will examine the attached scenario using your unique expertise and perspective. Using the relevant excerpts from the published Structured Literacy and Dyslexia Competencies included with the scenario, work together to recognize connections among the student’s needs, your educator roles and background, and the competencies.

This activity will :

- help educators recognize how elements of their own knowledge and practice connect to the Structured Literacy and Dyslexia Competencies.
- reinforce the idea that effective literacy support does not depend on a single educator possessing every competency but that they understand their own contributions, recognize the expertise of others, and know when and how to work together.
- highlight how the competencies can strengthen collaboration in practice, benefitting students and educators.



Activity: “What Do I Bring to the Team?”

Use a student scenario to recognize what you already bring, what colleagues contribute, and how the competencies can help connect that expertise.



OUR THREE-STEP PROCESS

1. **Meet your student**

   Notice strengths, needs, evidence, and possible next steps.

2. **Connect our expertise**

   Discuss how your knowledge and colleagues’ perspectives align with the competencies.

3. **Reflect and share**

   Identify an aha moment and something to bring back to your practice.

Step 1 | Meet Your Student

Working Independently

STEP 1

Working Independently

Read your assigned scenario and consider the student's strengths, needs, and available information.
Based on your role and experience, identify what stands out, what might be helpful, and what you might do next.

What strengths, needs, or patterns stand out?

What additional information would be helpful?

What next steps might I consider in my role?

Step 2 | Connect Our Expertise

Small-Group Discussion

STEP 2 Small-Group Discussion

1. Share your role and initial thinking about the student.
2. Review the two focal competency excerpts; explore others as useful.
3. Discuss how your collective expertise could inform next steps.

CONNECTIONS TO THE COMPETENCIES

Where do the highlighted competencies connect to our existing knowledge and practices?

WORKING TOGETHER

What did colleagues contribute? How could that expertise strengthen our next steps?

Step 3 | Reflect and Share

Individual Reflection

Before sharing with the larger group, take a moment to reflect on what you discovered.

MY AHA MOMENT

What did I recognize about my own practice or learn from a colleague's perspective?

WHAT I WILL TAKE BACK

What is one conversation or practice I want to strengthen in my school or district?

Share-Out: Building Stronger Together

Have one group member share one or two key insights from your discussion.

What connections did you notice between the competencies and your practice?

What did colleagues bring that expanded your thinking?

What could you take back to strengthen collaboration?

One connection • One contribution from a colleague • One takeaway

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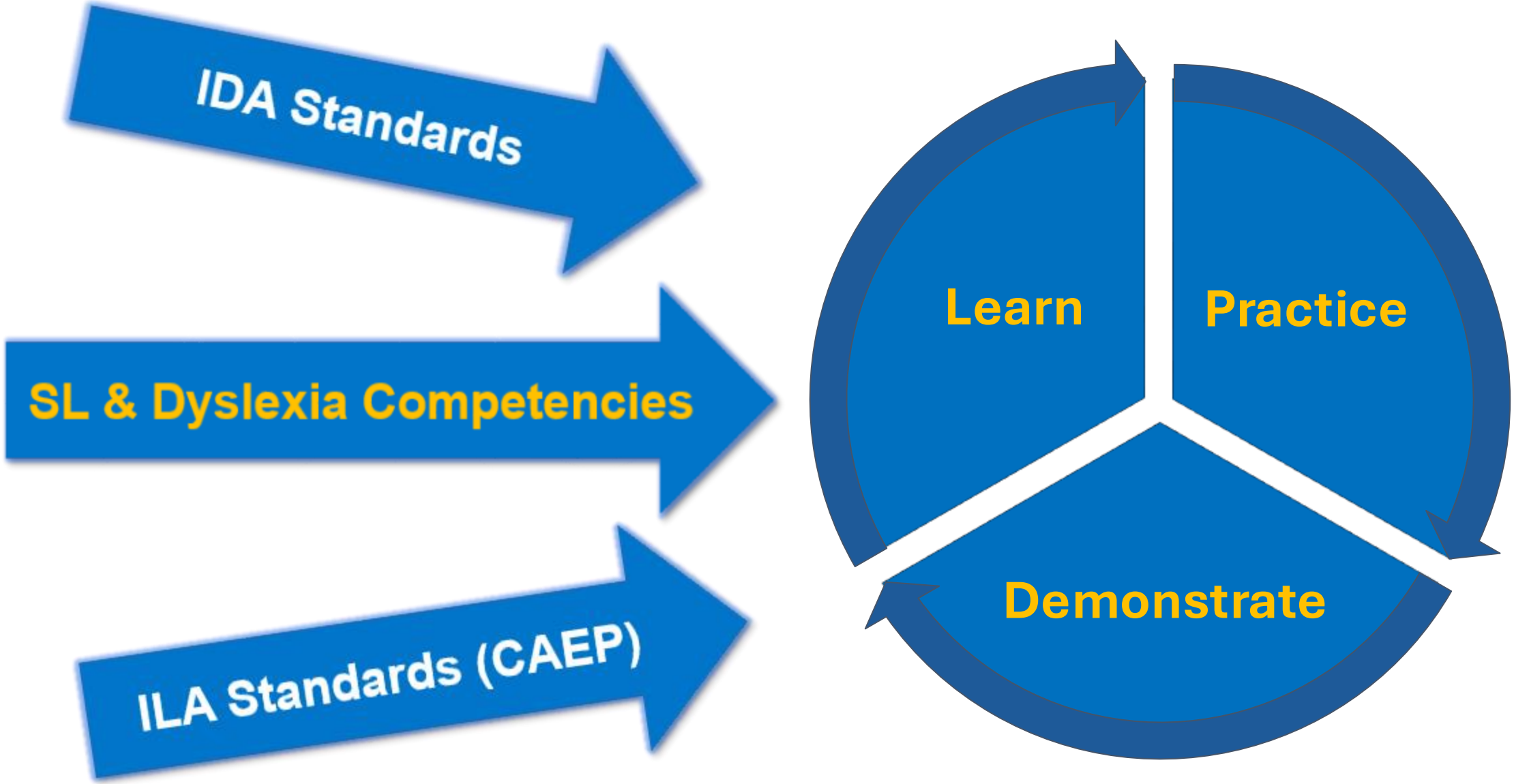
From Competencies to Preparation: Structured Literacy at Central

Dr. Dena Mortensen

Assistant Professor of Literacy Education

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Our Approach



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Competencies- Undergraduate 305

ELEMENTARY TEACHER PREPARATION • #305

Undergraduate courses • CT Elementary Educators role | illustrative area-level syllabus map

LEVEL	COMPETENCY AREA	LLA 315	LLA 316	LLA 412
FOUNDATIONAL	1 Literacy scholarship	I	I	I
FOUNDATIONAL	2 Language acquisition and development	D	D	D
FOUNDATIONAL	3 Literacy acquisition and development	D	D	D
FOUNDATIONAL	4 Principles of explicit instruction	A	A	A
FOUNDATIONAL	5 Dyslexia	I	—	I
FOUNDATIONAL	6 Assessment concepts and applications	A	D	—
INSTRUCTION	7 Phonological awareness instruction	A	—	—
INSTRUCTION	8 Phonics and word identification instruction	A	—	I
INSTRUCTION	9 Reading fluency instruction	A	—	I
INSTRUCTION	10 Vocabulary instruction	—	A	D
INSTRUCTION	11 Listening and reading comprehension instruction	—	C	D
INSTRUCTION	12 Written expression instruction	D	—	A
KEY	I Introduced	D Developed	A Applied	C Clinical

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Competencies- Graduate 102 Cert.

READING SPECIALIST PREPARATION • #102

Graduate courses • CT Remedial Reading role | illustrative area-level syllabus map

LEVEL	COMPETENCY AREA	LLA 502	LLA 504	LLA 508	LLA 514	LLA 516	LLA 518	LLA 520
FOUNDATIONAL	1 Literacy scholarship	D	D	A	I	D	I	A
FOUNDATIONAL	2 Language acquisition and development	D	A	D	D	D	D	I
FOUNDATIONAL	3 Literacy acquisition and development	A	D	D	D	D	D	D
FOUNDATIONAL	4 Principles of explicit instruction	A	A	A	D	C	C	—
FOUNDATIONAL	5 Dyslexia	I	—	—	D	A	D	—
FOUNDATIONAL	6 Assessment concepts and applications	C	I	—	A	A	C	D
INSTRUCTION	7 Phonological awareness instruction	A	—	—	I	A	C	—
INSTRUCTION	8 Phonics and word identification instruction	A	I	—	I	A	C	—
INSTRUCTION	9 Reading fluency instruction	D	—	—	I	A	C	—
INSTRUCTION	10 Vocabulary instruction	D	D	A	I	A	C	—
INSTRUCTION	11 Listening and reading comprehension instruction	D	D	A	I	A	C	—
INSTRUCTION	12 Written expression instruction	A	D	A	I	A	C	—
KEY	I Introduced	D Developed	A Applied	C Clinical				

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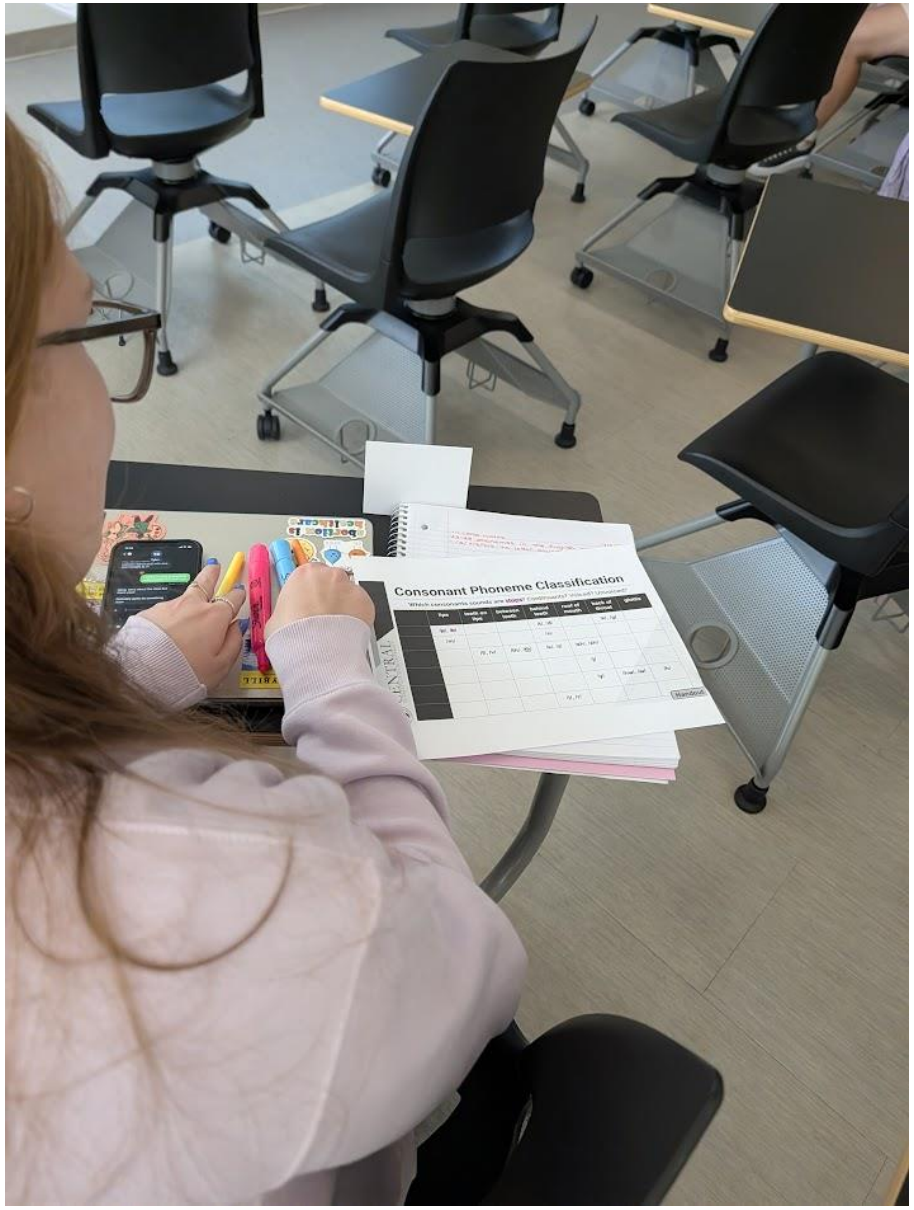
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Competencies in Action

How are the programs at Central supporting your teachers?

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Consonant Phoneme Classification



LETRS

Consonant Phoneme Chart

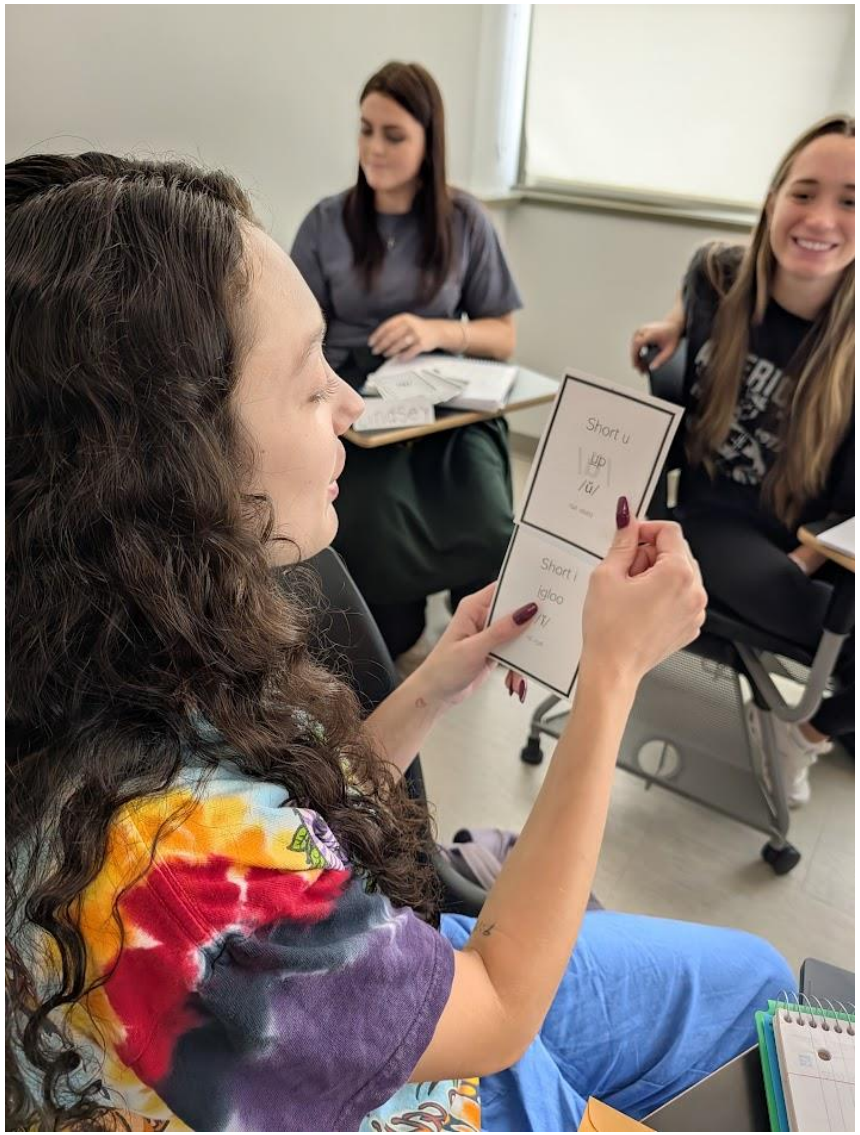
Consonant Phonemes by Place and Manner of Articulation

	Lips	Teeth/ Lips	Tongue/ Teeth	Ridge/ Teeth	Roof Mouth	Back of Throat	Glottis
Stops (Unvoiced / Voiced)	/p/ /b/			/t/ /d/		/k/ /g/	
Nasals	/m/			/n/		/ng/	
Fricatives (Unvoiced / Voiced)		/f/ /v/	/th/ /th/	/s/ /z/	/sh/ /zh/		
Affricates (Unvoiced / Voiced)					/ch/ /j/		
Glides (Unvoiced / Voiced)					/y/	/wh/ /w/	/h/
Liquids				/l/ /r/			

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Long/Short Vowel Sounds





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Long/Short Vowel Sounds

Pretest Data Average	Posttest Data Average
53%	92%

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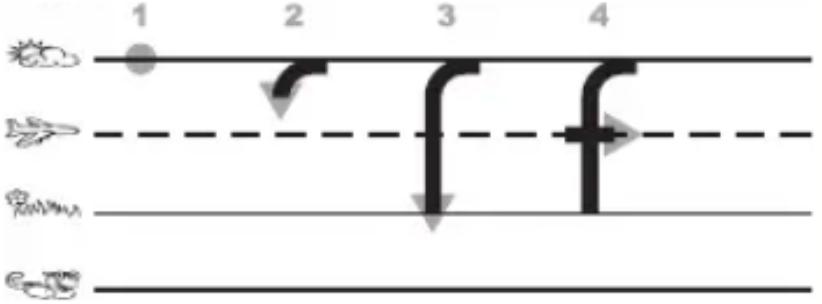
Handwriting Instruction



Letter Formation for f

f is a sky line letter.

It starts on the (sky line).



1. Point to the sky line.
2. Trace back on the sky line,
3. and then way down to the grass line.
4. Cross it on the plane line.
5. Say f - fun - /f/; have students repeat.

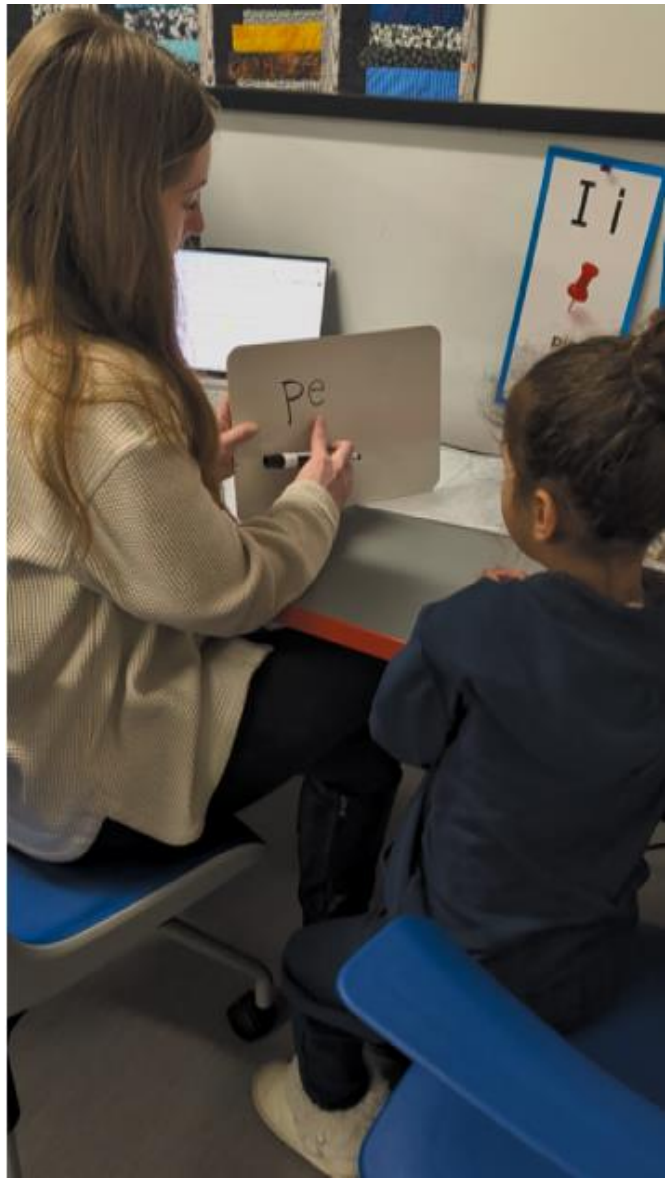
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Graduate Practicum



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Tutoring: Blending Words and Spelling

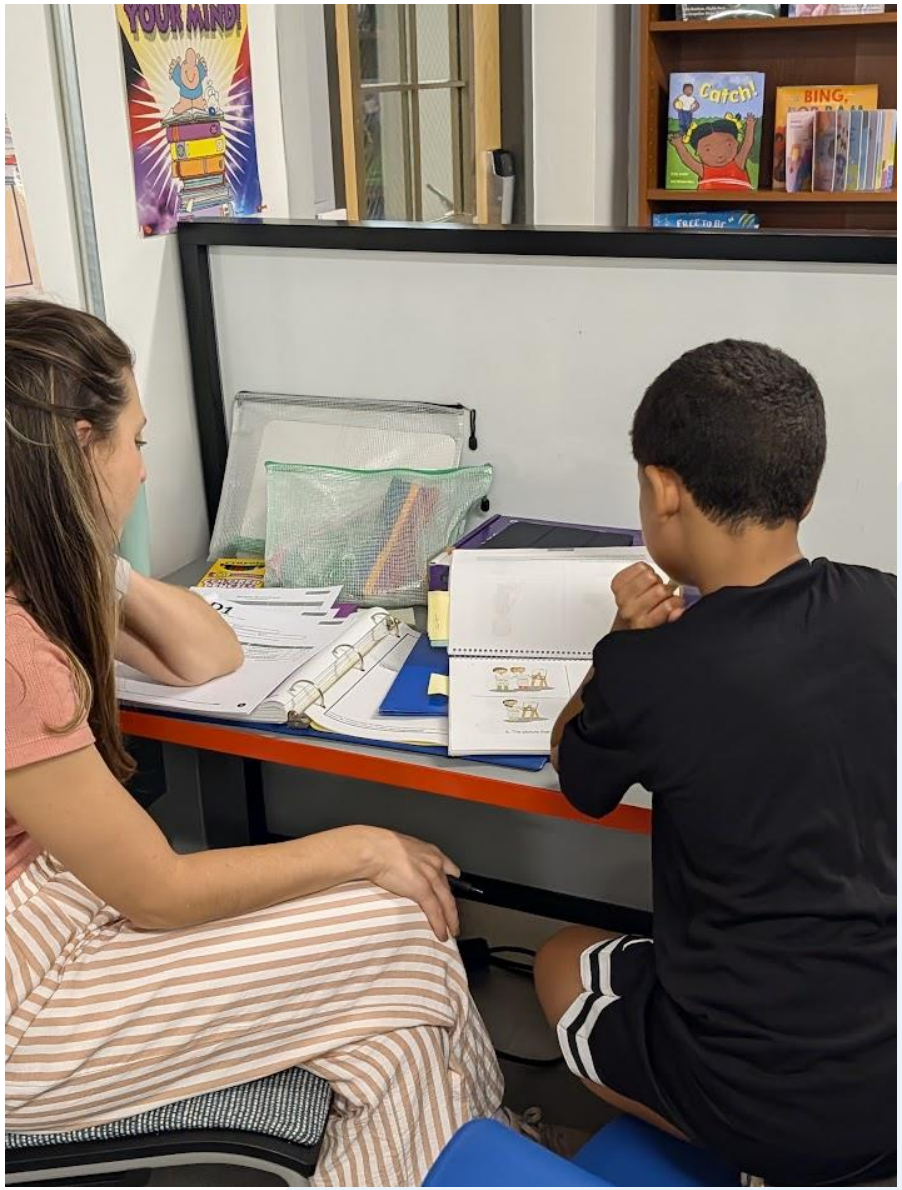




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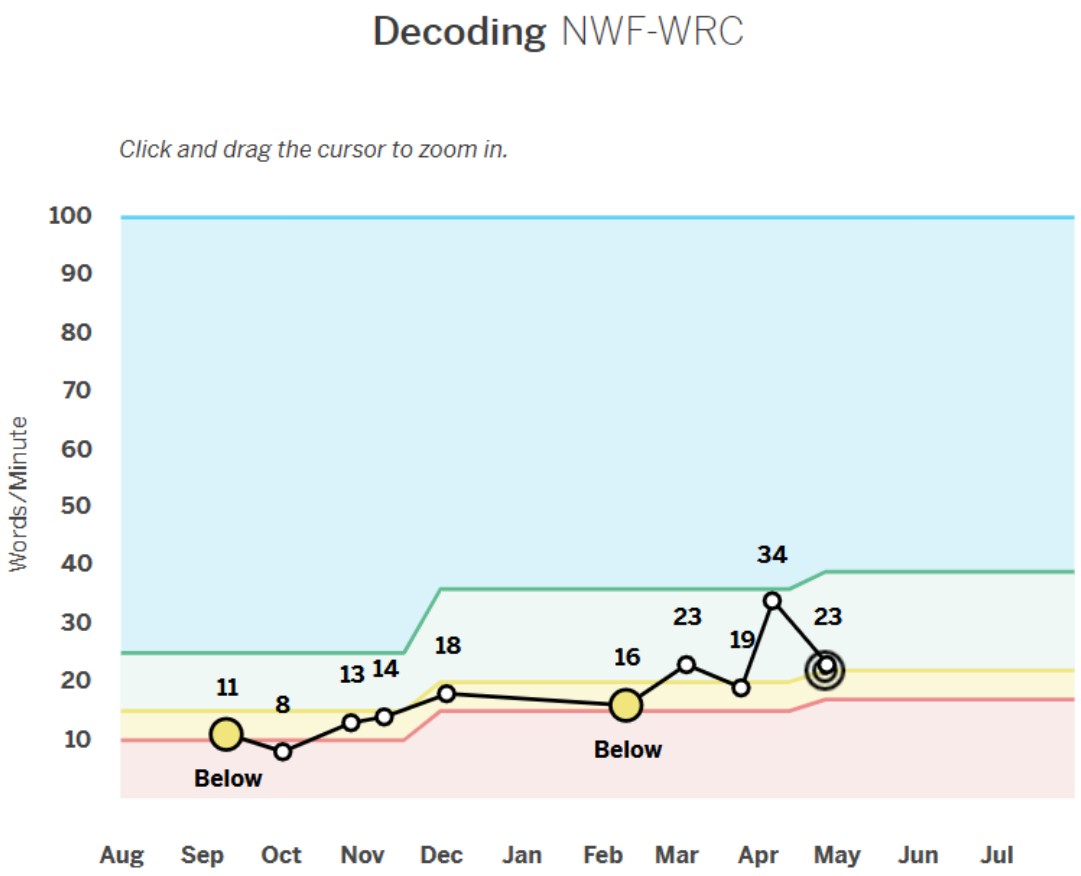
Tutoring: Assessment

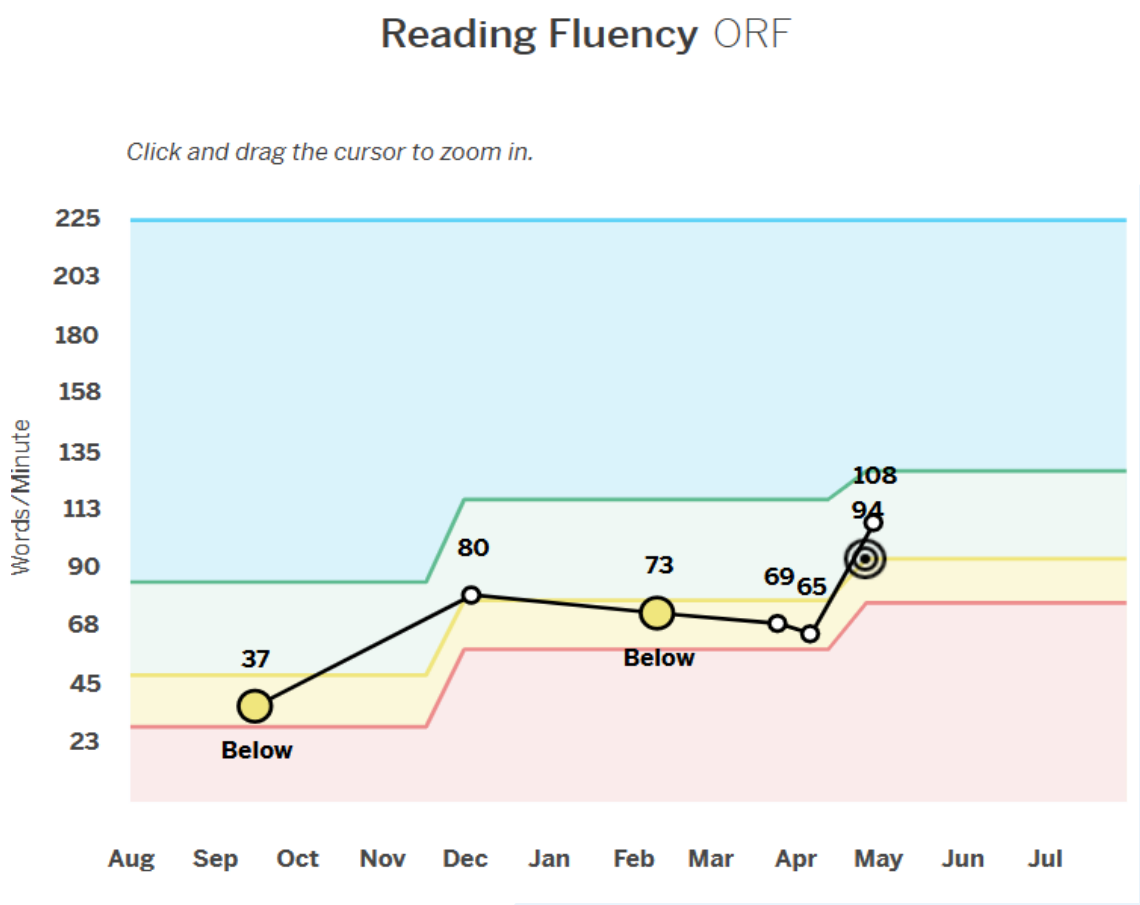




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Tutoring: Data-Based Individualization





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Tutoring: Data-Based Individualization

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Data-Based Individualization (DBI) Action Plan

Student: [redacted] Classroom Teacher: [redacted] Grade: 2 School: [redacted]

Date of Entry: 2/4/26 Interventionist: [redacted] Focus Area: Decoding - Silent Letters

Questions to Consider (ask teacher or guardians).	No The child received support and did not make **adequate progress.**	Yes The child has passed a **hearing** test.
	No The child is/has been **chronically absent.**	No The child has been **retained.** If yes, which grade?
	No The child receives **ESL** or has recently moved to the US.	Yes The child has been **screened** for reading difficulties.
	No The child wears **glasses.**	No The child has been **formally assessed** in reading by specialists.
		No The child struggles with **maintaining focus.**
Notes	Select other services provided to the child: Select Select	
Goal	TSW increase from 16 to 22 on NWF-WRC by EOY	
Plan	Resource: Decoding Guide Adtl Resource: N/A Interventionist: [redacted]	
Results (1)	PM Review Date (4-6 wks): 4/6/26 DBI Caseload Review. The child is: 3 of 4 Poins On/Above Benchmark.	
Next Step	Revise the plan Adaptation: Alignment Details: [redacted] is able to read all patterns on the phonics screener so we are moving to working on fluency.	
Goal	TSW increase from 73 to 94 on ORF WCPM by EOY	
Plan	Resource: Accuracy Automaticity Guide Adtl Resource: Fluency Accuracy Guide Interventionist: [redacted]	

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Program Outcomes

National Council on Teacher Quality

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Undergraduate Reading Foundations	Graduate Reading Foundations
A+	A+

National Council on Teacher Quality. (2026). Central Connecticut State University Undergraduate Elementary. Teacher Prep Review. [Data set]. https://teacherquality.nctq.org/review/viewProgram/Central-Connecticut-State-University-CT-1

Student Voices

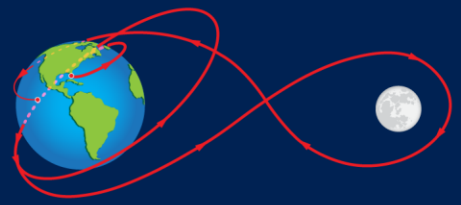
"This course helped me understand how to truly **teach students how to read**. I even used some of the things I learned when trying to decode unfamiliar words **in my own readings**."

"The course challenged us to develop our **foundational reading instructional skills** and **apply them daily**. We also wrote comprehension lesson plans using morphology of words. This helped us to not only **develop more meaningful lessons**, but to **use and reflect** on them".

"I thoroughly enjoyed this class. It really challenged my **understanding of the English language and how/why we do certain things**."

"The clinical experience was incredibly helpful. **Without this class I would not be prepared for my certification and next job**".

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Supporting the Work

Resources for Understanding, Application, and Implementation

Competency Resource You Can Use Now

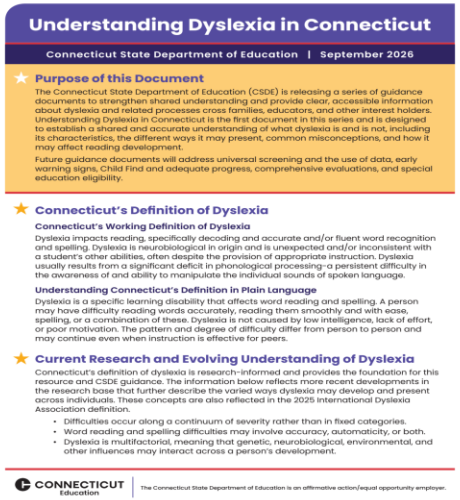


Dyslexia Resources You Can Use Now

Collections for Personal and Professional Learning

Developed through CT-DAC to build a shared, accurate understanding of dyslexia

Understanding Dyslexia in Connecticut



Understanding Dyslexia in Connecticut

Connecticut State Department of Education | September 2026

★ **Purpose of this Document**

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) is releasing a series of guidance documents to strengthen shared understanding and provide clear, accessible information about dyslexia and related processes cross families, educators, and other interest holders. Understanding Dyslexia in Connecticut is the first document in this series and is designed to establish a shared and accurate understanding of what dyslexia is and is not, including its characteristics, the different ways it may present, common misconceptions, and how it may affect reading development.

Future guidance documents will address universal screening and the use of data, early warning signs, Child Find and adequate progress, comprehensive evaluations, and special education eligibility.

★ **Connecticut's Definition of Dyslexia**

Connecticut's Working Definition of Dyslexia

Dyslexia impacts reading, specifically decoding and accurate and/or fluent word recognition and spelling. Dyslexia is neurobiological in origin and is unexpected and/or inconsistent with a student's other abilities, often despite the provision of appropriate instruction. Dyslexia usually results from a significant deficit in phonological processing–a persistent difficulty in the awareness of and ability to manipulate the individual sounds of spoken language.

Understanding Connecticut's Definition in Plain Language

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that affects word reading and spelling. A person may have difficulty reading words accurately, reading them smoothly and with ease, spelling, or a combination of these. Dyslexia is not caused by low intelligence, lack of effort, or poor motivation. The pattern and degree of difficulty differ from person to person and may continue even when instruction is effective for peers.

★ **Current Research and Evolving Understanding of Dyslexia**

Connecticut's definition of dyslexia is research-informed and provides the foundation for this resource and CSDE guidance. The information below reflects more recent developments in the research base that further describe the varied ways dyslexia may develop and present across individuals. These concepts are also reflected in the 2025 International Dyslexia Association definition.

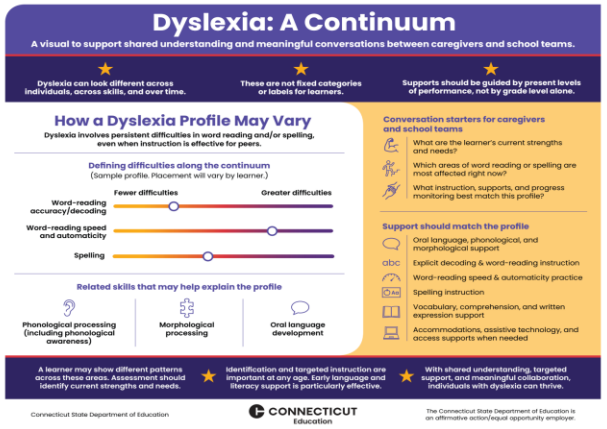
- Difficulties occur along a continuum of severity rather than in fixed categories.
- Word reading and spelling difficulties may involve accuracy, automaticity, or both.
- Dyslexia is multifactorial, meaning that genetic, neurobiological, environmental, and other influences may interact across a person's development.

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Use it to:

- Build shared language
- Clarify common misconceptions
- Understand how dyslexia may present

Dyslexia: A Continuum



Dyslexia: A Continuum

A visual to support shared understanding and meaningful conversations between caregivers and school teams.

★ Dyslexia can look different across individuals, across skills, and over time.

★ These are not fixed categories or labels for learners.

★ Supports should be guided by present levels of performance, not by grade level alone.

How a Dyslexia Profile May Vary

Dyslexia involves persistent difficulties in word reading and/or spelling, even when instruction is effective for peers.

Defining difficulties along the continuum

(Sample profile. Placement will vary by learner.)

Fewer difficulties — Greater difficulties

- Word-reading accuracy/decoding
- Word-reading speed and automaticity
- Spelling

Related skills that may help explain the profile

- Phonological processing (including phonological awareness)
- Morphological processing
- Oral language development

Conversation starters for caregivers and school teams

- What are the learner's current strengths and needs?
- Which areas of word reading or spelling are most affected right now?
- What instruction, supports, and progress monitoring best match this profile?

Support should match the profile

- Oral language, phonological, and morphological support
- Explicit decoding & word-reading instruction
- Word-reading speed & automaticity practice
- Spelling instruction
- Vocabulary, comprehension, and written expression support
- Accommodations, assistive technology, and access supports when needed

A learner may show different patterns across these areas. Assessment should identify current strengths and needs. ★ Identification and targeted instruction are important at any age. Early language and literacy support is particularly effective. ★ With shared understanding, targeted support, and meaningful collaboration, individuals with dyslexia can thrive.

Connecticut State Department of Education | CONNECTICUT Education | The Connecticut State Department of Education is an affirmative action/equal opportunity employer.

Use it to:

- See how profiles may vary
- Support team and family conversations
- Connect learner needs to supports

SHARED LANGUAGE | **CLEARER CONVERSATIONS** | **READY-TO-USE RESOURCES**

[View the full collection online]

Upcoming Resources: Competency Spotlights

Supporting Understanding and Application of Connecticut's Educator Competencies for Structured Literacy and Dyslexia

Competency Spotlight Video Series

Short focused videos that highlight each competency and its relevance to practice.

- Overview of the competency and key concepts
- Connections to real-world practice
- Examples across educator roles
- Part of a continuing series



Competency Spotlight Website Content

Web-based resources that provide easy access to key information and practical supports for each competency.

- Plain-language summaries of each competency
- Connections to practice, resources and examples
- Crosswalks to related resources and professional learning
- Organized by competency domain for easy navigation



Structured Literacy Professional Learning Framework

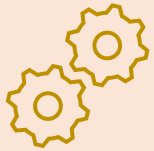
Building Knowledge. Strengthening Practice. Supporting Systems.

1 LEARN
Build Knowledge



- Access high-quality learning experiences
- Build shared understanding of structured literacy and dyslexia
- Explore evidence-based practices and resources

2 APPLY
Strengthen Practice



- Put learning into practice in your local context
- Use tools and supports to guide implementation
- Collaborate with colleagues to problem-solve and deepen practice

3 REFLECT
Supporting Systems



- Assess progress and impact
- Identify successes and challenges
- Use insights to refine implementation and plan next steps

STRONGER SYSTEMS FOR LASTING IMPACT



- Build district and regional capacity
- Integrate into existing professional learning systems
- Support sustained implementation and improved outcomes for all students

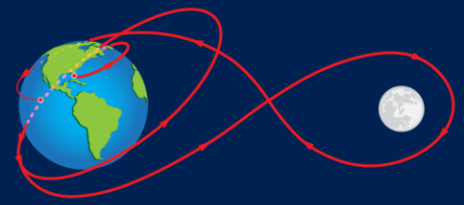
WHERE WE ARE NOW

2026-27 PILOT
We are launching a pilot to test and refine the framework, including supports and resources

ONGOING FEEDBACK
We will gather input from district leaders, facilitators, and RESC consultants to understand what works and what additional support is needed

LOOKING AHEAD
Pilot findings will inform future implementation and opportunities to expand support across the state

CONNECTICUT'S MISSION:
EMPOWER EVERY LEARNER'S JOURNEY



CONNECTICUT
Education

Carrying the Work Forward

From Today's Learning to Continued Conversation and Practice

Take It Back to Your Team

The value of the competencies is in how they help us see, connect, and strengthen our work

Shared foundation + differentiated expertise + collaboration = stronger support for students

1 Recognize

What are we already doing that aligns with the competencies?

2 Connect

How do instruction, assessment, intervention, and educator roles fit together?

3 Strengthen

Where would deeper knowledge, clearer roles, or stronger collaboration strengthen our work?

One question to carry forward:
What is one conversation or practice the competencies can help us strengthen?

Contact Us

Office of Dyslexia and Reading Disabilities

Stay Informed

Sign up for ODRD updates

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Thank you for attending the conference!

CT Literacy Conference

Please scan the QR code to provide us with feedback on your experience.



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