

# S7 E1 Audio

Tue, Feb 04, 2025 6:01PM 26:11

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

structured literacy, literacy talks, reading proficiency, explicit instruction, systematic instruction, science of reading, dyslexia, Orton Gillingham, International Dyslexia Association, literacy pioneers, reading failure, literacy instruction, literacy implementation, literacy podcast, literacy season

## SPEAKERS

Donell Pons, Stacy Hurst, Lindsay Kemeny, Narrator

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### **N** Narrator 00:03

Welcome to literacy talks, the podcast for literacy leaders and champions everywhere, brought to you by Reading Horizons. Literacy talks is the place to discover new ideas, trends, insights and practical strategies for helping all learners reach reading proficiency. Our hosts are Stacey Hurst, a professor at Southern Utah University and Chief Academic Advisor for Reading Horizons. Donnell Pons, a recognized expert and advocate in literacy, dyslexia and special education, and Lindsay Kemeny, an elementary classroom teacher, author and speaker. Now let's talk literacy.

### **D** Donell Pons 00:47

Welcome to this special season of the literacy talks podcast, where we delve into the 75th anniversary issue of the International Dyslexia Association's perspectives on language and literacy. This landmark issue is dedicated to structured literacy, the most effective approach for teaching all students to read and spell, including those with learning difficulties. We will also be talking to professionals in the field to get their understanding of structured literacy. In this episode, we'll be focusing on the foundational elements of structured literacy and what it means to teach in this way with research and evidence base as your practices, structured literacy embodies those principles that we know are good for all students that is explicit, systematic instruction. Throughout this season, we'll unpack the core components of structured literacy, discuss its practical applications, and hear from leading voices in the field, whether you're an educator, parent, or simply interested in effective literacy instruction, this episode and the season will provide valuable insights and inspire you to champion structured literacy. Welcome

### **S** Stacy Hurst 01:50

to the first episode of our new season of literacy Talks. My name is Stacy Hurst, and I'm joined by Lindsay Kemeny and Donnell Pons, and this is our season intro, and it is a very exciting

season. And I'm giving all the credit to Donnell for coming up with the idea. So Donnell, I'm actually giving you the credit and the mic. Do you want to lead us into this season? Oh,

D

Donell Pons 02:19

great. And then I'm going to have to confess this was fully baked and ready to go by the International Dyslexia Association in their perspectives publication. So I thank them for providing such a great publication, and that also gives our listeners a little bit of a hint. So being able to access, or get their hands on a copy online of perspectives, the 75th anniversary edition. We'll really be focusing on a lot of the pieces that are in there for this coming season. And so we'll also hit that up again to remind you, if you want to actually look at it, but we have some really good interviews. We'll have some good conversations. And so even if you don't have an opportunity to read it, you're really busy, you haven't been able to access Don't worry, tuning in, you'll still have a lot that you'll be able to dive into just listening. So again, if you can get your hands on it, fantastic. If not, do not worry. We're going to provide a lot of insight for you, an opportunity to listen to a lot of different topics surrounding structured literacy, which is going to be the year, as Stacy said, our season really going to take a deep dive. And as I mentioned before, the International Dyslexia Association chose to focus, for its 75th anniversary, which was a nice celebration for them, chose to focus on structured literacy. And so the entire publication does just that, and they speak with a lot of really great people in the field who have taken some time to write, to be concise about their thoughts and feelings on structured literacy, and it's all around the who, what, where, why, how, that stuff that we love and that we need. So I think educators are just going to love it. And the other thing is, is that this is really a conversation. So we we fully intend to kind of stop have a chit chat about things, because that's the way we do things, and also to talk about how it impacts each of us in our different settings. So that'll be important as well. And we're also going to provide, you know, not only that, definition of structured literacy for our listeners who are out there going, Hey, wait a minute. I'm not familiar with that term, although I assume a lot are, so I'm not assuming you don't know, but structured literacy is really a trademark term by the International Dyslexia Association, and this came about in about 2014 so it's been around for a while, and it was really a way of having folks who are in the field all working around this thing we call the science of reading, coalescing around some some good, significant things we take out of the science of reading about teaching what good reading instruction looks like. So that's what we're talking about when we talk about structured literacy, and it's the most effective approach, not just for students who experience difficulties with reading, like our folks who have dyslexia. So you might have heard it there those areas, but it's also for all students. We found that they can all get a boost from their reading instruction. And when using these principles of structured literacy. And so we'll talk a little bit about that. I was just going to ask Stacy and Lindsay, do you guys remember the first time you heard the term structured literacy? I

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Stacy Hurst 05:11

don't remember the exact date, but I do remember. I do remember actually wondering what it meant. And I think it kind of came about around the same time as we started using science of reading as a phrase ubiquitously. I do remember wondering the difference between the two. Yeah, I



L

Lindsay Kemeny 05:32

first heard of it when around when my son was diagnosed, a little bit after it might have been, you know, up maybe six months after he was diagnosed, when I really learned what it was. And I don't think we were using the term science of reading then, because I feel like that came a little bit later, or at least for me, for when I was aware of it. But, and you know, really, because my son was diagnosed with dyslexia, that took me on my journey to the IDA. And the IDA, as you mentioned, Donnell is who coined the term structured literacy. So and then I had an Orton Gillingham training, you know, pretty early on in my journey, maybe a year after he was diagnosed. And and, of course, they use the term structured literacy quite a bit. Yeah,

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Donell Pons 06:23

you know, it's interesting, because, as you say, each of us kind of has a different and Stacy. You couldn't remember the exact date, but you kind of think, oh, maybe it came around this time period. I think for all of us, it's kind of like, that's little hazy. We don't know the exact time period when we came in contact with certain things. But I think for me too, Lindsay, it was in a training I think that's when I and it was Wilson reading and spelling, and it was in that training I'm hearing this term structured literacy tossed around a little bit. And then in different settings, I'd hear some people chit chatting, and they've mentioned the term structured literacy. Sometimes at a conference, you might hear it dropped in. And then I was kind of surprised that as I made my way to the IDA website and was cruising around on the info sheets that they had, there was a graphic, and looking at this graphic and wondering, okay, that's really interesting. So where does this fit? And referring to it that way from time to time, for what I was gathering, the information I was gathering in conferences and things and in my settings, and then going back and referencing the infographic, that's kind of how I was introduced to it, too. But it was nice because it gave us a talking point. Didn't it? Structured literacy kind of gave you a talking point and a place to start. Did you guys find yourselves using it ever when people would say, Oh, well, so what's so different about what you do or what you think about reading? Did that term come in handy at all?

L

Lindsay Kemeny 07:36

Yeah, definitely. Especially when we say, you know, you know, what was I doing before balance literacy and it, you know, but it really gives you a map. And I remember if I felt like that, it kind of gave me this map of what I was supposed to be doing, yeah,

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Donell Pons 07:52

and Stacy, we've used it sometimes when we have been talking to folks at our State Office of Education, haven't we? It's been helpful

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Stacy Hurst 07:59

there, yeah, especially to focus on the word structure, because English has a structure. And I think in the the issue it mentions it's a structure within a structure within a structure, right? And it does, like Lindsay mentioned, give you really good clarity around having conversations about

what that instruction looks like and why it's important.

D

Donell Pons 08:22

Yeah, I love that. I think that's so great. We've just kind of stopped her a minute and had a chit chat about structured literacy, just to get our listeners you know this is if you're unfamiliar, it's okay, and to kind of think about okay, what are my own thoughts on structured literacy? What have I thought and then how that might be enhanced or change as you're listening to the podcast this season? That's what we're hoping that this does, is maybe broadens, expands and even gives some talking points for some folks that maybe don't really understand or you want to share this with, or you think it would be helpful. So just thinking of different ways in which the term structured literacy and what you're going to come to find out from these experts and others that we're going to be listening to how that might be helpful in whatever it is you're doing. I think it's really helpful with a lot of the work we do with advocacy, because structured literacy, as you guys have helped pointed out, so Well, it's a really good way of talking about the structure of how we do things. So if someone's really unfamiliar, it gives you a great baseline to start from. Well, it's explicit, it's systematic. It follows a sequence. It starts typically from things that are the foundational, easiest skills, and we build from there on it. It's mastery based. There's diagnostic to it. So all those really key, important parts are within that definition. See if there was real wisdom in putting it together. I'm in awe, aren't you guys, of the folks that came up with the term and sat around the table and came up with this. So we talked about some of the key takeaways that we're going to have from what we're chatting about, and we're hopefully going to do a deep dive. And the first one we thought we'd dive into is there is a first article, and it's not the only one, but Barbara Wilson and. And another individual, Jessica Hammond, who is the founder of glean education, of course, Barbara Wilson, we all know from the Wilson reading and spelling system, they have kind of come together and done a little article, one of the first articles, and it's kind of an introduction into what we're going to see with the rest of the IDA. And what's interesting is, I thought one of their first lines out of it, it was, it was important enough that I kind of underlined it and said, Oh, I'm going to, I'm going to share this one right directly from the book. But in this article, the two of them together, it says, Introduction to structured literacy and approach grounded in the science of reading. You'll hear that a lot. It's helping you understand the components of the science of reading. That first paragraph, structured literacy and the science of reading are part of a growing national conversation on literacy instruction best practices for some educators, structured literacy instruction an approach grounded in the science of reading. See it again, they're going to say that science of reading, a lot, science of reading research base, has been part of their practice for decades. So we're acknowledging that a lot of folks this isn't new information. For others, the approach is a shift away from previous practices. To support this shift, educators must understand what it looks like and how to implement it in their classrooms. So, you know, we're going to be getting a really nice, great, deep dive into what this is, and I love that they set it out for educators. Right?

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Narrator 11:16

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Stacy Hurst 11:58

I appreciated that they clarify. It's an approach and that helps it fit into I mentioned earlier, when you asked about our first experiences with the term, and I was confused. How does it differ from the science of reading? What's an approach that we use to implement what we learn from the science of reading? I appreciated that they gave it a term. They also the the graphic that you two have both referred to. They also name that which is helpful, so they refer to it as an info map. And they do that right away, too. I appreciated those call outs.

L

Lindsay Kemeny 12:35

One small thing I really like that they added when they said, you know, structured literacy is an approach grounded in the science of reading, research base. I like that they just added those two words, research base, because there's so much confusion about what the science of reading is. And I think it's this reminder to the reader reading the article, that when we're saying the science of reading, we're just talking about the research base. So I think that's good to remember. You know what it is, and this is structured literacy is, you know, based on that research, they're connected. They're integrated together. And then I love that they said educators must understand what it looks like and how to implement it in the classrooms. And isn't that what we've been talking about a lot on our podcast, is this implementation science and how really we need to turn a lot more attention and focus there. And so I appreciate they said that, because it's so true. We need to, we need to understand what it looks like. And hopefully, as we're, you know, embarking on reading this whole edition, this season, this edition of perspectives, and talking about each component, kind of breaking it down, hopefully that will help us understand what it looks like. You

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Donell Pons 14:00

know, Lindsay, that's a really good point, and I appreciate you going back and picking up those words again, because they are very, very clear. And that's one thing I'm hoping our listeners will also pick up on, is the fact that, hey, it seems like they're, they're being so attentive to saying these things over again and using them here. But that's really intentional, is to make sure we're very clear about how things fit together and how they support each other. And that I really appreciated, as you've pointed out just in this article, and you'll see it throughout the publication, it's another thing that's really great. I'm going to read a little bit more, and I want you guys to respond because I think this is also interesting. It continues in the second paragraph and says, in response to this, that is how to support that shift for educators who want to understand what it's like and what it looks like in the classroom. In response to this, the International Dyslexia Association is taking several steps to establish a common language and framework around the approach to unify the discussion and move the field forward. What do you think of that sentence?

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Stacy Hurst 14:58

Well, the. It really resonated with me is move the field forward. I love that elevating teaching as a profession, I think, is a very worthwhile goal. I love this

L

Lindsay Kemeny 15:13

idea of being unified, and I think a lot of us are especially, you know, in this science of reading community that we have, we are united in purpose, and we feel that when we go to different conferences, you know, the three of us have talked about that, we love that, but we have a lot of attacks happening on both sides. And I really would love to see you know both sides of the issue, all of us become more unified in purpose. What do we want? We want all our students to be able to read and write, and let's keep that you know, at the forefront and work together to make that happen. I you know it's easier said than done, but I like that call for unification.

S

Stacy Hurst 16:02

And you know, not only, of like Donald you said earlier, integrating all of the the elements or structures that we need to attend to an instruction, but Lindsay, what you're talking about as well, I feel like reminds me of, well, it calls my attention to the way they artfully did not dismiss the system which in we wherein we apply these things, right? So when you're talking about being unified, I was 100% agreeing with you and thinking also with people who are responsible for implementation, whether that's an administrator or support staff, it will help, I think, really provide a common language and vision,

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Donell Pons 16:46

and the wisdom of having something so well put together as structured literacy and with the talking points way and the way that it supports itself, so you can engage in these conversations, as you're saying, with everyone within a school system, right? So really appreciated that. Thought it was great. And I love that Barbara and and her cohort here, Jessica Hammond, led with that in this little piece here about the introduction too, because it gives us the whole understanding a good base to go. Yeah, I'm really excited about the rest of this, and potentially the things that I might be able to take back have discussion. And as we say, move the work forward right. There was other, something else I had on here is they go and lay out who's going to be in the publication. I tell you, it's a who's who. That's why we're really excited, because there's a lot of great contributors to this particular perspectives edition. And so it lays out that we're going to get some some information about the why, and that's going to be delivered by Corinne Weaver in here. He's talking within it as well. And then we're going to be getting a lot of information about the what and the how and the who, as I said, Barbara Wilson will appear again as she talks about the infographic. Stacey has talked about having a good visual, so for folks who like to see it visually, that will be nice. And then we have Lynnea Erie, who's going to weigh in, and it's always good to hear again, some of those principles that maybe we're familiar with, but she hits them again with phonemic awareness particularly. And Dr Louise Vera swirling is in here too, which I She's one of my unsung heroes. I don't know. It's been a while since I've heard from her or seen something, but every time she delivers, do you guys feel the same way?

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Stacy Hurst 18:19

Yes, I think she is one of those, those professionals that have an impact on our lives that we don't even realize. As educators, I know she was very central to my research for my master's thesis, but as I have only continued to read her work, I think, Oh, my goodness, she was calling this out. She was drawing our attention to this decades ago, right?

D

Donell Pons 18:44

And she, I remember, she wanted one of the foundational articles that showed us the difference between structured literacy and maybe business as usual or a whole language approach. And she laid it out very clearly and concisely. Did such a fantastic job with it. I used it so many times as a talking point. That's got to be at least 10 years ago. So like you say, have been around doing this for a long time. Have been in the field talking. So that'll be great to hear more from her, Dr Louis Dr Louise spear swirling. And then we're also going to have some words from Dr David Hereford, who's one of the editors in chief of this publication, perspective, and hear about his thoughts about how they came to this terminology, and then also some other really good information. He's got it with the work that he does around students who have dyslexia and learning more. So I think it's packed. It's media. Are you guys excited? I'm very excited. I'm really

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Lindsay Kemeny 19:33

excited, and on what we were just talking about. I'm just so grateful for these people who have been doing this work, researching and sharing their research for decades. I'm sure it's frustrating to them. You know that we haven't seen more movement, and I'm excited that now, you know we have a lot of national attention on this, and I hope it really moves the work forward. But I'm just so incredibly. Thankful for, you know, these literacy pioneers and these, these, these individuals who have been doing this for a long time and dedicating, you know, so much time to it. We can learn so much from them. And yes, I'm excited. So this, we just talked today. We're just talking about this. It's introduction to structured literacy, right this article, and we would love everyone to read along with us. So we assume this is our first one. We know you haven't read anything yet, but we'd say, you know, start with this introduction we just talked about today. And then, like Donnell said, there's the other one by David Hereford and Carolyn Cohen, which is also an introduction. Structured literacy prevents reading failure, right? So we would recommend reading that one before our next episode. Yeah,

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Donell Pons 20:51

with David. And then also it might be this season. If you haven't subscribed to get those episodes coming to you, this might be the season you want to do that, because if you're in with the first one. They're all just going to support each other. It might be that time that you say, I, you know, I haven't typically subscribed, but this year, I think I want to get those in order. So

try that also, to keep yourself on a schedule, to make sure you're getting the next episode if you're following along, that ought to help too, because we will be doing that in an order this year.

L

Lindsay Kemeny 21:16

When Donnell, have we shared, did you mention where our listeners can find the perspectives issue,

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Donell Pons 21:24

yeah, so the International Dyslexia Association website, and you can go there and access this perspective 75th anniversary edition, and

L

Lindsay Kemeny 21:33

it's wonderful. They made it available for free, because normally for perspectives, it's available to those who have a paid membership to Ida, right? But this one big, 75th one is free to everyone, which we thought this would be perfect for our season, because you can just go and download a copy.

S

Stacy Hurst 21:52

I'm also really excited about it, because not only does it encapsulate all of structured literacy, which is clearly what our podcast address every episode, but also, you know, just beckoning back to Louise spear swirling work, she was one of the first people to kind of highlight the difference between teacher knowledge and student outcomes, and the fact that you can't do either without implementation, right? So one of the tenets of our podcast is that we're all in all three of us currently are in different spaces in the literacy context, but I love that this issue will address no matter what your role is in education. Then we can increase our knowledge, but also improve our practice and help move the work forward. As they say, Yeah,

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Donell Pons 22:47

I love that. And the talking points, right? This is a really excellent to ground yourself in the structured literacy as a talking point when you're having conversations around the work, it's fantastic every time. Great. Well, I'm excited. I'm very excited for the season to get rolling, and we've already been doing some behind the scenes work, so that'll be really nice to be able to share that with everybody, because we've been, we've been sitting on this for a little while, just knowing that we wanted to do this, and so being able to share it, it's finally coming true for us. And as Lindsay said, she's giving you some options about how to download those articles. But again, if you're unable to, and you don't have time, you don't necessarily have to, because we will be having really good interviews with folks sharing information. So don't feel like, Oh, I haven't, haven't been able to read, so I won't be able to know. You'll still get a lot out of each episode. And then we've also encouraged you, folks, if you haven't subscribed in the past,



maybe this is the season you want to to make sure those episodes come to you in order, because they will support each other as it goes through the publication. Just a couple of thoughts for enjoying this season, this year with us. And again, we want to thank everybody. This is really this curated season, because that's really what it is, is that we've really thought about it and curated it, and not that we don't other seasons too, but we've really intentionally set this out to build on itself for the season is really our hope. It's something that we want to provide to our listeners, because you've been such great listeners, and we feel like this is a really great way to embrace folks that maybe have a different background and they don't know as much, and getting some basics of structured literacy be nice, a refresher for those of us who know, and also a way in which we, if we've known it for a long time, another perspective to look at it with some new materials that are coming from the International Dyslexia Association to support it. So we thought it was a really good choice this season. We hope you guys enjoy it too. We're excited, yeah,

**S** Stacy Hurst 24:27

and even if you're just refining your knowledge right and improving how you're implementing these things, one thing to note, so I'm glad you brought that up, is that this will be a little bit different of a format for us, because we don't have too many guests on our podcast, but you'll see many more guests this this season. I almost said semester, which I'll tell you where my mind is this season, and we're really excited about that too, and we'll

**L** Lindsay Kemeny 24:56

be following once you get your perspectives edition that will be. Following that order. So we have today's an introduction. Our next episode is going to be an introduction as well, with with David Hereford, and then we're just following, if you kind of look at the table of contents there, we're going to be talking about why we're going to have an episode, why? Structured literacy. We're going to be talking about the what of structured literacy, the how and the who. So it's going to be a great, great season. Yeah, thank you

**S** Stacy Hurst 25:27

again, Donnell for bringing the idea to us, and we were so excited to readily embrace that it's great. So yeah, we're looking forward to a new season. Thank you for joining us as ever, and we look forward to having you join us for more episodes of literacy talks,

**N** Narrator 25:48

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