Making Grade Level Standards Accessible to Students with Learning Disabilities

Karrie Musgrove
Specific Learning Disabilities Program Specialist
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS)

www.FLDOE.org

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Research has demonstrated that children with disabilities who struggle in reading and mathematics can successfully learn grade-level content and make significant academic progress when appropriate instruction, services and supports are provided.

*For a discussion of this research see Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged: Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities, Final Rule, 89 Fed.Reg.50773, 50776 (August 21, 2015)*
Oscar is a 6th grade student with a Specific Learning Disability. He struggles to read on 2nd grade level. However, his listening comprehension is on grade level. He needs special instruction in phonics to improve his skills in reading multisyllabic words. In order for Oscar to gain access to grade-level content standards he will need accommodations for all grade-level reading assignments.
How can Oscar learn 6th grade content when he has a 2nd grade reading level?

Oscar’s reading assignments will be on grade level content, but shortened to avoid fatigue in reading, a result of his disability. In addition he will be provided with digitalized text that he can track and hear as he reads. Oscar will continue to receive phonics instruction within a small group.
These supports allow Oscar to progress in the general curriculum on the state’s 6th grade level standards while still addressing his needs, which are based on his present level of performance.

Now for the big reveal........................
This isn’t really Oscar’s example, but OSERS’ example that can be found in the November 16, 2015 Dear Colleague Letter under the subheading, An Example of Implementation. (https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/idea/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/guidance-on-fape-11-17-2015.pdf)

We have plenty of resources available to all of our little (and big) Oscars, but how do we make them readily available to all teachers serving this population of our students?
Two fast, easy, and **free** resources to support access to grade level standards for our students with print disabilities:

LearningAlly

and

Bookshare
Helping Florida Turn Struggling Readers into Grade-Level Achievers
Key Facts:

1948

80,000 Human-read Audiobooks

375,000 Students
At Least 20% of Students Eligible for Learning Ally

- Tier 1: 80% of Students
- Tier 2: 15% of Students
- Tier 3: 5%
Who is Eligible?

**Reading Accommodation** - Students who struggle with reading, who are not responding to instructional interventions, or who need a reading accommodation to keep up with course content while working to improve reading skills. A competent authority should conduct student observations, assessments, and a review of student work to determine if the student’s reading skill deficits are consistent enough to prohibit accessing standard texts at the expected benchmarks for the student’s grade.

**Specific Learning Disability** - Students who have a specific learning disability, meaning a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. It includes conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Students in this category often have SLD on their IEP or have a diagnosed learning disability.

**Blind or Visually Impaired** - Students who are blind or visually impaired.

**Other Physical Disability** - Students who have a physical impairment that prevents them from reading standard print, such as can’t hold a book, turn the pages of a book, etc.
The POWER of Human-Read Audiobooks

- Multi-Sensory Approach
  - Focus
  - Visualize
  - Retain
- Engagement

Mr. and Mrs. Dursley, of number four, Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much. They were the last people you’d expect to be involved in anything strange or mysterious, because they just didn’t hold with such nonsense.

Mr. Dursley was the director of a firm called Grunnings, which made drills. He was a big, beefy man with a very large face, and he was always frowning.
Let’s Discover
Florida Partnership

BEESS Discretionary Project

- Unlimited Site License for All Florida Public and Charter Schools
- Collaborative trainings
- Book recording
Why Brevard uses Learning Ally - From a teacher

HI Michelle,

I wanted to thank you again for coming to show me how to use Learning Ally. I introduced this to my classroom the beginning of this week and they were so excited to be able to choose higher level books to read. Today in our reading block they came up to me asked right away if they could have time to read!!! This NEVER happens! I am so excited to see the potential of this for my students and for my school.
Why Brevard uses Learning Ally
From a parent-

I am finally excited Aaron has found something that has given his love of reading back to him.

It is not a struggle to get him to read anymore.

Thank you all for all that you do to make Aaron succeed and soar.

Thanks,
Ready to Make Learning Ally a Success in Your District?

• District Overview
• District Preparation
• School Setup (School and Student Enrollment)
• Training & Support

Check the QR Code for a district implementation plan
Even in a district this size

Brevard Public Schools

• “Large” size-alike
• Approximately 100 schools including public and charters
• Approximately 9500 students enrolled in Learning Ally
District Support

• FDLRS/East Technology Resource Teacher
• District Literacy Resource Teachers (Elementary and Secondary)
• District Media Specialist Resource Teacher
• District MTSS Trainers
• District ESE Resource Teachers (SLD/Inclusion)
• Assistive Technology Team (LATS & Vision Impaired Teachers)
Before Rollout

• School Administrators:
  Identified 2 contacts per school to serve in the Admin/Certifier role (Recommended 1 MTSS contact and 1 ESE contact)

• FDLRS/East Tech:
  Enrolled schools as provided by administrators, and worked with Learning Ally state contact to ensure district access to all schools for support

• Educational Technology:
  Created a district wide student bulk upload using Excel template provided by Learning Ally (Educator bulk upload not done)
School Contact & School Tech Training

• Create distribution list for all school contacts
• Consider using Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams for sharing tutorials, updates and for contact questions
• School Contact Responsibilities (Admin) Role
  • Enroll faculty members in the Instructor Role
  • Certify newly enrolled students
  • Train faculty in Learning Ally basics (Assign books to students, read books, and review student data)
  • Technical support

**School based tech specialists install Learning Ally Link schoolwide for teachers and student computers**
Thank You

Kimberlie Nilson
Educator Engagement Manager
609 651-8550

knilson@learningally.org
Learningally.org/florida
Problem: Printed Text Doesn’t Work for All Learners

- At least 5% of your district’s students experience a barrier to reading printed books
- Ebooks are often just as problematic as printed books
- These students need to consume content in different ways

BUT
- They need access to the same materials, at the same time, as their peers
Bookshare Fills the Gap

Bookshare is an ebook library that makes reading easier. People with reading barriers such as dyslexia, blindness, and physical disabilities can read in ways that work for them:

- Listen to books read aloud
- Follow along with audio and highlighted text
- Read in large type
- Read in Braille
Bookshare Offers...

- 676,000+ titles! (~5K titles added each mo.)
  - Textbooks
  - Books for assigned and leisure reading
  - Books for “upskilling”
  - Periodicals
- FREE memberships for all qualified U.S. students of any age (funded by U.S. Dept of Education)
- Many FREE, low-cost, and commonly available reading options
Who Qualifies?

• Anyone certified by a Competent Authority* as having a qualifying condition that hinders reading/processing printed text, such as:

  • Learning Disability that affects reading, e.g. dyslexia
    • Need for Reading Accommodations is a good leading indicator
  • Low Vision / Blindness
  • Physical disability that affects reading

• Learning Ally operates under same copyright exception

*Examples of Competent Authorities: AT Coordinator, Dyslexia or Reading Specialist, Special Education Teacher, Teacher of the Visually Impaired, Librarian, Psychologist, family doctor, ophthalmologist, etc.
Bookshare Account Types

• Organizational
  • Teachers ("Sponsors") add qualified students ("members"), set user names & passwords, assign books to students via Reading Lists
  • Students log in, find books, read (can only open books shared with them by their teachers)

• Individual
  • Student + parent (if student is under 18) sign up, submit signed Proof of Disability (POD) form
    • If student already has school acct, no POD needed
  • Student logs in, searches for books, reads
Getting Started is Easy!

Educators:
• Create account/Log in
• Add qualified students and assign books
  • Subscribe to or copy ready-made Reading Lists
  • Create custom Reading Lists
  • Request new books when needed

Students:
• Log in
• Look at lists
• Select book
• Read!
Many Reading Options!

• **Chromebooks/Computers**
  • Bookshare Web Reader – FREE
    • Can be enhanced with TextHelp’s Read&Write for Google or Don Johnston’s Snap&Read Chrome extensions
  • Capti Voice – FREE
  • Microsoft Edge (Windows 10) – download in EPUB format
  • Microsoft Word – download in Word format

• **iPad and iPhone**
  • Dolphin Easy Reader – FREE (also available for Android)
  • iBooks – FREE (download in EPUB format)
  • Capti Voice – FREE
  • Voice Dream Reader - $14.99 (also available for Android)
Students: Read *Your* Way!

View video found at https://youtu.be/ieUHenk6Zrk?t=3s
Reading Demonstrations
An Educator’s Perspective

• Melanie Buchanan, ESE Facilitator, Polk County Schools
• How Bookshare is helping students succeed in reading
Next Steps for FL Educators

- Use the Educators Get Started guide
- Create organizational accounts, or our system will help you get added to existing ones
- Add qualified students, add other teachers
- Assign books by sharing Reading Lists
- Show students how to log in and read!
  - Use the new “Find a Reading Tool” wizard
Questions?

Christine Jones, MBA
Senior Education Program Manager
Benetech Global Literacy
christinej@benetech.org
Tel. 650-352-0210