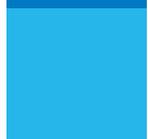
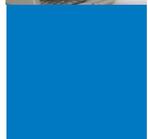


WHAT IS MSL INSTRUCTION?



Learning Ally



Students with dyslexia need **multisensory structured language (MSL)** instruction. This means that teaching techniques are explicit, direct, cumulative, intensive, focused on the structure of language, and coordinating the use of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic–tactile pathways simultaneously to enhance memory and learning of written language. Connections are consistently reinforced between the symbols the student sees, the sounds the student hears, and the actions they can feel.

CONTENT: What is taught?

Phonology and Phonological Awareness: Phonology is the study of sounds and how they work within their environment. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in a given language that can be recognized as being distinct from other sounds in the language. Phonological awareness is the understanding of the internal linguistic structure of words. An important aspect of phonological awareness is phonemic awareness or the ability to segment words into their component sounds.

Sound-Symbol Association: This is the knowledge of the various sounds in the English language and their correspondence to the letters and combinations of letters which represent those sounds (also called phoneme-grapheme correspondence). Sound-symbol association must be taught (and mastered) in two directions: visual to auditory and auditory to visual. Additionally, students must master the blending of sounds and letters into words as well as the segmenting of whole words into the individual sounds.

Syllable Instruction: A syllable is a unit of oral or written language with one vowel sound. Instruction must include the teaching of the six basic types of syllables in the English Language: closed, vowel-consonant-e, open, consonant-le, r-controlled, and diphthong. Syllable division rules must be directly taught in relation to the word structure.

Morphology: Morphology is the study of how morphemes are combined from words. A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in the language. The curriculum must include the study of base words, roots, and affixes.

Syntax: Syntax is the set of principles that dictate the sequence and function of words in a sentence in order to convey meaning. This includes grammar, sentence variation and the mechanics of language.

Semantics: Semantics is that aspect of language concerned with meaning. The curriculum (from the beginning) must include instruction in the comprehension of written language.



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PRINCIPLES OF INSTRUCTION: How it is taught?

Simultaneous, Multisensory (VAKT): Teaching is done using all learning pathways in the brain (visual, auditory, kinesthetic-tactile) simultaneously in order to enhance memory and learning.

*EXAMPLE: When shown a flash card of **a**, the student says the letter name “a”, then the key word “apple”, then the sound /ă/ while using hand motions to illustrate “eating an apple”.*

Systematic and Cumulative: Multisensory language instruction requires that the organization of material follows the logical order of the language. The sequence must begin with the easiest and most basic elements and progress methodically to more difficult material. Each step must also be based on those already learned. Concepts taught must be systematically reviewed to strengthen memory.

*EXAMPLES: The sound-symbol associations for **i** / ĭ / and **ng** / ŋ / are taught before the suffix **[ing]** or spelling pattern **nk** is introduced. The closed syllable type is taught before the vowel-consonant-e syllable type.*

Direct Instruction: The inferential learning of any concept cannot be taken for granted. Multisensory language instruction requires the direct teaching of all concepts with continuous student-teacher interaction.

*EXAMPLE: To teach the spelling rule for /ch/. The teacher will deliver a lesson demonstrating the use of **tch** following short vowels and **ch** after long vowel or consonant sounds. She will also discuss words that are an exception to this rule and provide plenty of practice opportunities for both reading and spelling words with the sound /ch/ so that feedback and reinforcement can be delivered.*

Diagnostic Teaching: The teacher must be adept at prescriptive or individualized teaching. The teaching plan is based on careful and continuous assessment of the individual's needs. The content presented must be mastered to the degree of automaticity.

EXAMPLE: During one of her regularly scheduled progress monitoring probes, the teacher discovers that the student shows a pattern of short vowel miscues. Even though all short vowel lessons have been delivered to the student, the teacher will revisit short vowels in future lesson plans and will reinforce with various short vowel discrimination activities until the student demonstrates mastery in both accuracy and automaticity.

Synthetic and Analytic Instruction: Multisensory, structured language programs include both synthetic and analytic instruction. Synthetic instruction presents the parts of the language and then teaches how the parts work together to form a whole. Analytic instruction presents the whole and teaches how this can be broken down into its component parts.

*EXAMPLE: The teacher uses direct instruction to introduce the sound-symbol association for **qu** /kw/, shows the student how to blend (decode) words with **qu** and at the same time shows how to spell (encode) words with the sound /kw/.*

Adapted from “Clinical Studies of Multisensory Structured Language Education for Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders” published by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council and distributed by The International Dyslexia Association.