1. What is the Science of Reading (SoR)?

The Science of Reading is an evidence-based field of research that spans over five decades. It explores how reading and writing develop, why difficulties occur, and how to teach effectively to improve literacy outcomes. SoR emphasizes the importance of foundational skills and higher-order literacy through structured literacy, which is explicit, systematic, and cumulative.

2. What is Structured Literacy?

Structured Literacy is a teaching approach that integrates both foundational and higher-level literacy skills. It includes:

- Explicit Instruction: Clear, direct teaching of concepts
- Systematic Methods: An organized sequence of skills, progressing from simple to complex.

Active Practice: Repetition, feedback, and reinforcement to strengthen learning. Key components of Structured Literacy include phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing, all supported by oral language as the foundation for literacy development.

3. What are the key components of literacy instruction?

- Phonemic Awareness: The ability to manipulate sounds in words (e.g., isolating, blending, segmenting).
- Phonics: The systematic teaching of letter-sound relationships, essential for decoding words, and reinforced through writing as students apply these relationships to spell and form words.
- Vocabulary: The explicit teaching of word meanings, morphology, and connections between words.
- Fluency: The ability to read with accuracy, speed, and expression, supporting comprehension.
- Comprehension: Developing understanding through background knowledge, modeling strategies, and questioning techniques.

Oral language serves as the essential wrap-around tool, providing the foundation for all literacy skills by supporting communication, vocabulary development, and critical thinking.

4. What are Universal Screeners and why are they important?

Universal Screeners are quick, standardized tools used to identify students who may be at risk for reading difficulties. These assessments help teachers pinpoint areas where students may need additional support early on. Examples of Universal Screeners include DIBELS, Acadience., aimsweb+

5. What are Diagnostic Measures?

Diagnostic Measures are in-depth assessments designed to evaluate specific reading difficulties or learning needs. These evaluations help guide tailored interventions. For example, the CORE Phonics Survey is used to assess phonics proficiency.

6. How is Progress Monitoring used in literacy instruction?

Progress Monitoring involves ongoing assessments to track student growth and the effectiveness of instructional strategies. Regular monitoring ensures that students are making progress and that teaching practices are adjusted as needed.

7. What resources are available to support literacy instruction?

- Phonemic Awareness: Programs like Heggerty and UFLI Foundations offer systematic, explicit lessons in phonemic awareness.
- Decodable Texts: These texts are designed to reinforce phonics skills. Examples include Flyleaf Publishing and Dandelion Readers.
- Assessment Tools: Tools such as the SD23 Early Literacy Profile are used to assess on going literacy skills.

8. How does this framework support diverse learners?

This evidence-based approach aligns instruction with best practices that can be adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners. It ensures that every student, regardless of background or ability, has access to the support they need to develop strong literacy skills.

By integrating structured, systematic instruction with ongoing assessment, this framework provides a solid foundation for improving literacy outcomes for all students.