



ZELMA WYNN
SYMPOSIUM

UNPACKING COMPREHENSION

FROM NEUROSCIENCE TO PRACTICE



Saturday, March 1, 2025
8:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Riva Trace Baptist Church
475 W Central Avenue
Davidsonville, MD 21035



Ensuring High Quality
Professional Development



ASHA CE
APPROVED PROVIDER

University of Maryland

Intermediate Level
0.45 ASHA CEUs



Approval for 6 Professional Development Points,
available for in-person attendees only



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AGENDA

Time	Session & Speaker
8:30 - 9:00 AM	Registration and Continental Breakfast
9:00 - 10:00 AM	The Neuroscience of Reading: Tracing Literacy from Language to Comprehension - <i>Dr. Ola Ozernov-Palchik</i>
10:00 - 10:15 AM	BREAK
10:15 - 11:30 AM	<i>Reconceptualizing Reading Comprehension: Role of Knowledge - Dr. Hugh Catts</i>
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM	Teaching Students to Make Inferences When Reading: Four Steps - <i>Dr. Bonnie Singer</i>
12:30 - 1:15 PM	LUNCH BREAK
1:15 - 2:15 PM	Classroom Implications - <i>Dorothy Flint and Christine Shea</i>
2:15 - 2:30 PM	Summary and Wrap-up, Dr. Joan Mele-McCarthy

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SPEAKER BIOS



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Dr. Ola Ozernov-Palchik is a Research Assistant Professor at Boston University Wheelock College of Education & Human Development and core faculty at the AI & Education Initiative. She is also a Research Scientist at MIT's McGovern Institute for Brain Research. Dr. Ozernov-Palchik's multi-disciplinary research centers on the cognitive neuroscience of language and literacy development, with a strong emphasis on translational work aimed at advancing learning for all students and promoting educational equity. Her work has produced over two dozen scientific publications on the topic of literacy, and she was awarded the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) Young Investigator Award. Her recent line of research includes harnessing and advancing AI to create effective, personalized, and scalable tools for literacy.



Dr. Hugh Catts is Professor of the School of Communication Science and Disorders at Florida State University. His research interests include the early identification and prevention of reading disabilities. He is a past board member of the International Dyslexia Association and past board member and President of the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading. He has received the Samuel T. Orton Award from the International Dyslexia Association and the Honors of the Association from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association for his career contributions in each of these disciplines. His current research concerns the early identification of reading and language disabilities and the nature and assessment of reading comprehension problems.



Dr. Bonnie Singer has been dedicated to clinical service, teaching, research, publishing, and professional education for over 35 years. With a primary interest in how language and cognition support and constrain academic performance, Dr. Singer is particularly passionate about working with students who struggle with executive functions and writing. As the Founder and CEO of Architects For Learning, she led an interdisciplinary staff serving K-college students in the Boston area for 30 years. She also founded Vivido, which develops high quality professional learning for SLPs, educators, and schools in evidence-based instructional methods for language, literacy, and learning. Dr. Singer is a board-certified specialist in child language. She was recognized by the American Speech-Language Hearing Association in 2023 for Outstanding Contributions in Clinical Achievement. In 2024, Vivido merged with Wilson Language Training. Dr. Singer currently serves as Head of Writing Science & Instruction at Wilson. Her research and numerous publications focus on the relationship between spoken and written language, spatial processing, executive functions, cognition, and self-regulated learning.



Christine Shea is a veteran educator with over 20 years of experience teaching English and Language Arts at The Summit School. Since her retirement from full-time classroom teaching in 2020, she has served as Language Arts Coordinator. Chris provides integral support to teachers in curriculum planning, assessment, and differentiation. Her extensive expertise and commitment to supporting students with dyslexia and other learning differences make her an invaluable resource and teacher leader.



Dorothy Flint is an experienced Speech-Language Pathologist with 13 years of dedicated service at The Summit School. In her current role as the Oral Language Coordinator, she plays a pivotal part in enhancing oral language development for students as part of the foundation of reading and writing skills. Previously, Dorothy served as the Lower School Language Arts Coordinator, where she supported best instructional practices across grade levels. With extensive experience in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of speech and language disorders, Dorothy is committed to helping students develop the skills needed to succeed academically and socially. Her expertise in speech and language development, coupled with her comprehensive experience in educational environments, makes Dorothy a vital resource for students, families, and educators at The Summit School.



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Learner Outcomes

Session 1

Participants will be able to explain the neurocognitive processes involved in reading comprehension and how these processes develop in the human brain.

Participants will be able to identify key differences in literacy development between individuals with and without dyslexia, with a focus on the neurocognitive factors that contribute to these differences.

Session 2

Participant will be able to describe the role of knowledge, language, and reasoning in comprehension.

Participants will be better able to apply their understanding of comprehension to assessment and instruction.

Session 3

Participants will use visual tools to reveal the cognitive and linguistic underpinnings of inferencing.

Participants will implement a four-step, systematic intervention for making inferences while reading.

Participants will explain the similarities and differences between making predictions and inferences.

Session 4

Participants will list three reasons how deficits with working memory and language organization and retrieval impact reading comprehension.

Participants will be able to describe three ways to make language visible for children who struggle with working memory.

All speakers have no financial or non-financial relationships or interests to disclose.