# SUMMER INSTITUTE SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

**Jan Hasbrouck, Keynote: The Essential Role of Teachers… for ALL of Us.**
We who have chosen education as our professional path know the joys and the challenges of teaching. In this talk, Jan Hasbrouck reflects on her own journey as a teacher and the important teachers who shaped her career, and gives all educators a moment to reflect on their work and the essential role that teachers play in all our lives.

**Jan Hasbrouck, Breakout: Reading Fluency: Essential for Comprehension and Motivation**
Fluency is essential for skillful and motivated reading but is often misunderstood. Fluent reading is NOT fast reading! This session defines reading fluency and clarifies the link between fluency and comprehension. The role of fluency assessments and effective fluency instruction will also be discussed.

**Structured Literacy 101: Building Strong Readers with Evidence-Based Strategies, Rebecca Tolson, University of Akron:**
Ready to transform how you teach reading? This interactive session will introduce you to Structured Literacy, a powerful approach grounded in the Science of Reading designed to support all learners–especially those with dyslexia. This session explores the key principles of instructional content that integrate the domains of language and the essential principles of instruction that guide how content is taught for reading and writing. Walk away with actionable strategies to implement Structured Literacy in the classroom.

**Mitigating the Matthew Effect for Struggling Adolescent Readers, Michelle Elia, The Reading League Ohio**
Ameliorating the impact of poor literacy skills at the adolescent level (middle school and high school) is no easy task. It requires systemic changes at the district and building level as well as instructional changes at the classroom level. This session will provide straightforward guidance on how to plan for the implementation of MTSS at the adolescent level, with recommendations for both systems-level changes in tier one and with interventions.

**English Learners 101: Loi Dang-Nguyen and Emily O'Dell, Akron Public Schools:**
Learners (ELs) need targeted support to succeed academically. Proficiency in English is essential for understanding lessons, completing assignments, and engaging in class discussions. Without proper support, ELs may fall behind in their education, which can affect their long-term academic success. This session will provide participants with a better understanding of the English Learners and participants will walk away with strategies and resources to help service EL students in their district.

**Using MTSS to Reach High Achieving Students for Optimal Reading Achievement, Amanda Nickerson, Ohio K-12 Literacy TA Specialist**
When viewed as a needs-based model for differentiation, a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) is a promising way to alleviate reading difficulties and provide enrichment opportunities simultaneously. This tiered service delivery model can be leveraged to provide systematically intensified support for students who require additional practice and additional challenges at a faster pace. Thus, this session will detail the importance of serving highly skilled, high-achieving, gifted, and twice-exceptional students within a comprehensive MTSS framework as informed by the science of reading. The professional learning needs of educators and the instructional implications of tiered enrichment services will also be addressed.

**Word Study (Phonics, Spelling and Handwriting), Gail Evanchan, University of Akron:**
This presentation will focus on the fundamental principles and concepts of the structure of language, with a focus on the sound-symbol correspondences (phonics & spelling) of language to the reading process. Candidates will learn about the scientific and evidence-based foundations of word analysis in reading, spelling and handwriting, the cognitive processes involved, and how to support literacy development through middle school and beyond.

**MTSS and Data, Toan Dang-Nguyen and team, Akron Public Schools:**
Join us as presenters highlight the MTSS framework for ELA in Akron Public Schools and demonstrate how it has supported data-driven, differentiated learning for their diverse student population across all grade levels. Participants will gain valuable insights into the MTSS approach at the district level and see how it's effectively implemented at the school level.

**Dyslexia Simulation, NOBIDA:**
How does it feel to be an individual with dyslexia? Through simulations, participants will experience the challenges individuals with dyslexia confront when performing language-related tasks. This hands-on session is designed to improve understanding and encourage the use of effective teaching techniques and accommodations.

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**Why SIOP? Making Grade -Level Content Comprehensible for Multilingual Leaners, SAVAAS: Gretchen Gose, National Account Manager, SAVAAS:Why SIOP®?**

All students benefit from instruction utilizing SIOP (Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol). Lessons following the SIOP Model instructional framework are asset-based amd are especially vital to making grade-level content comprehensible for multilingual learners while simultaneously accelerating students' academic language development. Learn how to transform content language and make it accessible for all students. In this session, participants will actively experience a few of the teaching strategies and activities utilized in the SIOP framework.

**Transforming Small Group Instruction, Mija Trammell, University of Akron:**

Participants will explore the structures and strategies needed to maximize reading instruction for all readers in their classroom. From data-based grouping to simple progress monitoring and everything in between, teachers will leave empowered to launch the school year with effective, structured small-group instruction.

**Maximizing Word Learning Through the POSSUM Approach, Sarah Cooey, University of Akron:**

Participants will learn about the Science of Reading-supported approach to explicit vocabulary instruction created by Dr. Maryanne Wolf. A background in word recognition in the brain, orthographic mapping, and the Four-Part Processing Model will lay the foundation for the approach. After we explore the six elements of POSSUM-Phonology, Orthography, Syntax, Semantics, Understanding, and Morphology, we will see how the strategy works in action. Teachers will be provided with graphic organizers and worksheets they can use in their own classrooms.

**Bringing Writing to Life: AI Tools to Support the Writing Revolution, Karen Stepic, Akron Public Schools:**

Discover how AI tools can make writing instruction easier, faster, and more engaging! In this session, we'll explore practical ways to support key Writing Revolution strategies with AI tools such as ChatGPT, MagicSchool, Brisk, and image generation tools. You'll leave with practical, ready-to-use ideas and digital tools to streamline your writing instruction and help students become stronger, more confident writers.

**Explicit Reading and Writing Instructional Practices, Kim Nagy, SST 8 - Akron Public Schools:**

This professional learning session will explore evidence-based strategies for explicit literacy instruction to strengthen student reading and writing achievement. Participants will learn research-supported approaches aligned with the science of reading and writing, with writing instruction embedded throughout to reinforce skills in sentence construction, text organization, and written expression.

**Structured Literacy Certification, Rebecca Tolson, University of Akron:**

Many educators seek clarity on Structured Literacy certification with the growing emphasis on evidence-based reading instruction. This session provides essential information on certification options, requirements, and the impact on teaching practices. Participants will explore key components of high-quality training, practicum expectations, and potential pathways for professional growth. Whether you're considering certification or supporting others, this session will equip you with the knowledge to navigate the evolving landscape of Structured Literacy credentials.

**Refugee Simulation, Loi Dang-Nguyen and Katey Yinger, Akron Public Schools:**

Refugees experience a variety of trauma in their journey. The purpose of a refugee simulation is to help participants understand and empathize with the experiences of refugees and displaced people. By simulating the challenges and decisions faced by refugees, such as navigating border crossings, securing shelter, or coping with limited resources, this session aims to raise awareness of the hardships refugees endure. It also helps participants grasp the complexities of the refugee crisis, fostering empathy, improving problem-solving skills, and encouraging advocacy for refugee rights and better policies.

**Early Literacy and Family Engagement, Pam Kennedy, SST8**

Laying the Foundations of Emergent Language and Literacy explores how foundational language and literacy skills develop in early childhood, guided by insights from the Science of Reading. Participants will examine the essential components of emergent literacy and learn practical, evidence-based strategies to strengthen oral language, phonological awareness, vocabulary and print knowledge in young learners at school with ideas to send home. Ideal for teachers, administrators, coaches and any instructional leader, this session bridges research and practice to ensure that the youngest children build strong foundations for lifelong reading success.

**Sentence-level Interventions/Syntax, Kristin Webber, Edinborough**

This session will provide teachers with a deep understanding of sentence-level comprehension—what it is, why it matters, and how to support it effectively in the classroom. Participants will explore how syntax, sentence structure, and cohesion impact students' understanding of text, and how difficulties at the sentence level can hinder overall reading comprehension. Strategies and classroom practices will be shared that help students develop the skills to make meaning from sentences, particularly those that are complex or carry heavy informational loads.

**MTSS Panel**

Heath City Schools (Trevor Thomas, Kelly Holbrook)  |  Tallmadge City Schools (Jen Stewart)
Canton City Schools (Amy Konigsberger, Cynthia Lavoie, Heather Stepanovich)  |  Wadsworth City Schools (Laura Maslyk, Kelly Gleason)