



Dyslexia: Theory and Research (MIT Press Classics)

Frank R. Vellutino

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Dyslexia is a term commonly used to refer to severe and pervasive reading impairment in otherwise normal children. Because dyslexia technically refers to reading disability in brain injured patients, organic disorder has been one of the most frequently cited reasons for why Johnny can't read. It is also one of the most misunderstood and expensive problems known to psychologists and educators. Millions of dollars are spent annually on research, assessment, and treatment programs for dyslexia from which concerned parents and teachers have sought help. Most of the research on the subject however has been characterized by poorly designed experiments, informal observations, and equivocal results. This book makes available the first systematic and comprehensive treatment of dyslexia. It carefully examines the problem, points out the flaws in many of the educational techniques currently being used for training dyslexics, and presents new theories as to what constitutes specific reading disability. The book is divided into three sections. Part I considers the various definitions of dyslexia that have been offered, discusses the problems inherent in choosing a meaningful research population, and surveys the major theories of this disorder from the turn of the century to the present. Part II examines in detail the four major conceptions of dyslexia outlined in the first section -- visual perception, intersensory integration, serial processing, and verbal processing. Here, Vellutino provides evidence suggesting that, contrary to popular belief, dyslexic children do not see letters backward. Instead, he suggests that specific reading disability is associated with deficiency or disorder in one or more aspects of linguistic functioning, or in visual-verbal association learning, and discusses research that supports these possibilities. The first two sections of the book are summarized in Part III, which also suggests areas of future research and discusses the implications of research findings for the development of assessment and treatment programs for dyslexia. The analyses, conclusions, and suggestions in this study will be of particular interest to specialists and students in developmental psychology, learning disability, education, linguistics, speech and hearing, pediatrics, neurology, and reading theory.

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