Structured Literacy

- Structured literacy is a scientifically researched based approach to the teaching of reading. Structured literacy can be in the form of teachers trained in the use of structured literacy methodologies and programs that adhere to the fundamental and essential components of structured literacy.

- Structure means that there is a step by step clearly defined systematic process to the teaching of reading. Including a set procedure for introducing, reviewing and practicing essential concepts. Concepts have a clearly defined sequence from simple to more complex. Each new concept builds upon previously introduced concepts.

- Knowledge is cumulative and the program or teacher will use continuous assessment to guide a student’s progression to the next clearly defined step in the program. An important fundamental component is the automaticity of a concept before progression.

- Skills are explicitly or directly taught to the student with clear explanations, examples and modelling of concepts.

‘The term “Structured Literacy” is not designed to replace Orton Gillingham, Multi-Sensory or other terms in common use. It is an umbrella term designed to describe all of the programs that teach reading in essentially the same way’. Hal Malchow. President, International Dyslexia Association

A Position Statement on Approaches to Reading Instruction
Supported by Learning Difficulties Australia

"LDA supports approaches to reading instruction that adopt an explicit structured approach to the teaching of reading and are consistent with the scientific evidence as to how children learn to read and how best to teach them.

Programs that follow an explicit structured approach to the teaching of reading include as an integral part of the teaching program specific instruction in phonology, sound-symbol associations, as well as syllable structures, morphology, syntax and semantics as a basis for
developing accurate and fluent word reading and reading comprehension. Such programs conform to the definition of ‘structured literacy programs’ as adopted by the International Dyslexia Association in July 2014.

“We use the term structured literacy to encompass instruction that emphasizes the structure of language, including the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), meaning relationships among words and their referents (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse.” The Centre for Effective Reading Instruction https://effectivereading.org/certification/the-exam/
Structured literacy programs and approaches that follow Orton-Gillingham methodologies will have a multisensory component. Whilst all other elements of a structured literacy approach or program have been extensively scientifically validated adequate research is not yet available to support the multisensory component.

"There is a growing body of evidence supporting multisensory teaching. Current research, much of it supported by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), converges on the efficacy of explicit structured language teaching for children with dyslexia. Young children in structured, sequential, multisensory intervention programs, who were also trained in phonemic awareness, made significant gains in decoding skills. These multisensory approaches used direct, explicit teaching of letter–sound relationships, syllable patterns, and meaning word parts. Studies in clinical settings showed similar results for a wide range of ages and abilities."

ORTON–GILLINGHAM–BASED AND/OR MULTISENSORY STRUCTURED LANGUAGE APPROACHES International Dyslexia Association 2000
Structured literacy programs
MultiLit reading programs, Read Write Inc., Sounds-Write, Get Reading Right, Barton Reading Program, Lindamood Bell

Structured Reading pedagogy (teaching methodologies)

Orton- Gillingham Approach
Multisensory Structured Language Approach

This list is in no way complete. There are many programs and tutors who adhere to a structured literacy approach. Inclusion in this fact sheet does not represent an endorsement. Please seek professional advice.

Read about it: scientific evidence for effective teaching of reading / Kerry Hempenstall ; editedby Jennifer Buckingham. 2016 research report

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