



Early Reading in Texas

State of New Mexico

Legislative Education Study Committee

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Dyslexia

Source of difficulty is the failure to develop phonological processing skills (language at the sound level).

- **Impacts learning letter-sound correspondences**

- **Impacts word recognition**

- » **Impacts fluency**

- » **Impacts comprehension**





Texas Timeline

1985

TEC § 38.003

Screening and Treatment for Dyslexia and Related Disorders

1986

First Dyslexia Handbook Published by the Texas Education Agency

1996

Governor George W. Bush

Texas Reading Initiative

1997

TEC § 28.006

Reading Diagnosis law passed



1996 – Texas Reading Initiative

- Initiated by Governor George W. Bush
 - Mandated that all children be able to read by 3rd grade
 - Use of scientific research-based reading instruction





1997 – TEC § 28.006

- Law passed related to Reading Diagnosis
 - **Reading assessments (screenings) required for all kindergarten through second grade students**
 - **Used to identify, treat, and monitor the progress of students at risk for dyslexia or other related disorders**



Texas Timeline

1999

Student Success Initiative

Teacher Reading Academies

2001

No Child Left Behind

Reading First

2004

Reauthorization of IDEA

Data required to show underachievement not due to lack of appropriate instruction (RTI)

2011

SB 866

Educator Preparation Candidates must receive instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia



2011 – SB 866

- Requires all university candidates completing an Educator Preparation Program to receive instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia including:
 - **Information on the characteristics of dyslexia**
 - **Identification of dyslexia**
 - **Effective, multisensory strategies for teaching students with dyslexia**



Texas Dyslexia Handbook - 2007

- Provisions for English language learners were included in the 2007 revision of the Texas Dyslexia Handbook
- According to Youman & Mather, (2012), Texas is the only state that provides explicit regulations of data gathering and assessment to identify ELLs with dyslexia.

Youman, M., & Mather, N. (2012). Dyslexia laws in the USA. *Annals of Dyslexia*. Advance online publication.



Research Related to Teacher Knowledge

Washburn, E. K., Joshi, R. M., & Binks-Cantrell, E. S. (2011). Teacher knowledge of basic language concepts and dyslexia. *Dyslexia*. Advance online publication.

- Primarily elementary teachers
- More than half of the teachers had difficulty counting phonemes (sounds) in complex syllables
- Only 29% knew the correct definition of phonemic awareness
- Teachers more successful on items requiring implicit, rather than explicit, knowledge



Thank you!

Texas Education Code §28.006 (State Law)

§28.006. Reading Diagnosis

- (a) The commissioner shall develop recommendations for school districts for:
 - (1) Administering reading instruments to diagnose student reading development and comprehension;
 - (2) Training educators in administering the reading instruments; and
 - (3) Applying the results of the reading instruments to the instructional program.

- (b) The commissioner shall adopt a list of reading instruments that a school district may use to diagnose student reading development and comprehension. A district-level committee established under Subchapter F, Chapter 11, may adopt a list of reading instruments for use in the district in addition to the reading instruments on the commissioner's list. Each reading instrument adopted by the commissioner or a district-level committee must be based on scientific research concerning reading skills development and reading comprehension. A list of reading instruments adopted under this subsection must provide for diagnosing the reading development and comprehension of students participating in a program under Subchapter B, Chapter 29.

- (c) Each school district shall administer, at the kindergarten and first- and second-grade levels, a reading instrument on the list adopted by the commissioner or by the district-level committee. The district shall administer the reading instrument in accordance with the commissioner's recommendations under Subsection (a)(1).

- (d) The superintendent of each school district shall:
 - (1) Report to the commissioner and the board of trustees of the district the results of the reading instruments; and
 - (2) Report, in writing, to a student's parent or guardian the student's results on the reading instrument.

- (e) The results of reading instruments administered under this section may not be used for purposes of appraisals and incentives under Chapter 21 or accountability under Chapter 39.

- (f) This section may be implemented only if funds are appropriated for administering the reading instruments. Funds, other than local funds, may be used to pay the cost of administering a reading instrument only if the instrument is on the list adopted by the commissioner.

- (g) A school district shall notify the parent or guardian of each student in kindergarten or first

or second grade who is determined, on the basis of reading instrument results, to be at risk for dyslexia or other reading difficulties. The district shall implement an accelerated reading instruction program that provides reading instruction that addresses reading deficiencies to those students and shall determine the form, content, and timing of that program. The admission, review, and dismissal committee of a student who participates in a district's special education program under Subchapter B, Chapter 29, and who does not perform satisfactorily on a reading instrument under this section shall determine the manner in which the student will participate in an accelerated reading instruction program under this subsection.

(h) The school district shall make a good faith effort to ensure that the notice required under this section is provided either in person or by regular mail and that the notice is clear and easy to understand and is written in English and in the parent or guardian's native language.

(i) The commissioner shall certify, not later than July 1 of each school year or as soon as practicable thereafter, whether sufficient funds have been appropriated statewide for the purposes of this section. A determination by the commissioner is final and may not be appealed. For purposes of certification, the commissioner may not consider Foundation School Program funds.

(j) No more than 15 percent of the funds certified by the commissioner under Subsection (i) may be spent on indirect costs. The commissioner shall evaluate the programs that fail to meet the standard of performance under Section 39.051(b)(7) and may implement sanctions under Subchapter G, Chapter 39. The commissioner may audit the expenditures of funds appropriated for purposes of this section. The use of the funds appropriated for purposes of this section shall be verified as part of the district audit under Section 44.008.

(k) The provisions of this section relating to parental notification of a student's results on the reading instrument and to implementation of an accelerated reading instruction program may be implemented only if the commissioner certifies that funds have been appropriated during a school year for administering the accelerated reading instruction program specified under this section.

Text of subsection (l) effective until January 1, 2002. (l), (m) Expired.

Added by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 397, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997. Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 396, Sec. 2.11, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

*Amended by: Acts 2006, 79th Leg., 3rd C.S., Ch. 5, Sec. 3.05, eff. May 31, 2006.
Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1058, Sec. 6, eff. June 15, 2007.
Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1340, Sec. 1, eff. June 15, 2007.
Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 895, Sec. 26, eff. June 19, 2009.*

Comprehensive Literacy Initiatives

Rai Thompson

Neuhaus Education Center

November 13, 2012

“If we're going to have a successful democratic society, we have to have a well educated and healthy citizenry.”

∞ Thomas Jefferson

Neuhaus Education Center

- Is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to the prevention of reading failure
- Was founded in 1980
- Is located in Houston, Texas
- Has provided professional development in evidence-based reading instruction for more than 60,000 teachers

Effective Reading Instruction

- Reading Comprehension (RC)
 - Decoding (D)
 - Language Comprehension (LC)

$$RC = D \times LC$$

English Language Learners

- 5.5 million English Language Learners (ELLs)
- 80% of ELLs speak Spanish in the home

Brownsville Independent School District

- On Texas-Mexico border
- 41,000 students
 - 95% ELLs
 - 98% Free or Reduced Meal
- *Reading Readiness and Language Enrichment*



Houston Independent School District

- Seventh-largest district in the country
- 203,000 students
 - 62% Hispanic
 - 25% African-American
 - 8% White
 - 5% Other

Houston Independent School District

- *Phase 1 – September through May, 2012*
- Provide all HISD elementary school principals (173) professional development
- Provide all teacher development specialists, K-12 literacy coaches, and special education program specialists (335) professional development
- Provide all K-3 general education classroom teachers (approx. 3,000) professional development
- Provide Tier III K-12 teachers (approx. 300) professional development

Houston Independent School District

Phase 2 – June through December, 2012

- Provide facilitated online presentation modules on small group instruction
- Provide targeted professional development for K-2 teachers whose students did not make expected gains
- Provide targeted professional development for Grade 3 teachers whose students did not make expected gains
- Provide advanced professional development for TIER III K-5 teachers.
- Provide professional development for Grade 4 and 5 teachers
- Provide professional development for Grade 6 and 9 teachers of struggling readers.

Houston Independent School District

- *Common Ties: Transferring from Spanish to English*
- *Creating Literacy Leaders*

Thank you!

NEUHAUS EDUCATION CENTER COMPREHENSIVE LITERACY INITIATIVES

Thomas Jefferson proposed, “If we're going to have a successful democratic society, we have to have a well educated and healthy citizenry.” Alarmingly, the National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL) survey estimated that 43% of adults in the US lacked proficiency in basic literacy skills (Kutner et al., 2007). Difficulties in learning to read may stem from: 1) inadequate instruction or schooling, 2) undiagnosed or untreated learning disabilities, or 3) lack of proficiency in English. Many of these difficulties can be prevented or ameliorated when teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in teaching reading. Unfortunately, most teachers do not receive adequate preparation in our colleges and universities. Neuhaus Education Center (Neuhaus) presents two comprehensive literacy initiatives, both beneficial to students who are typically developing readers, those at risk for learning failure, and English Language Learners (ELLs).

Effective Reading Instruction

Reading comprehension, the ultimate goal of reading instruction, is the product of decoding and language comprehension (Gough & Tunmer, 1986; Hoover & Gough, 1990). That is, symbols on a printed page must be translated into spoken words (i.e., decoding), and meaning must be attached to those words (i.e., language comprehension). Impairment in either component will result in overall reading failure. Both decoding and language comprehension must be explicitly addressed to insure skilled reading.

Commonalities of English and Spanish

Languages with an alphabetic principle, or writing system, represent individual speech sounds in spoken words with written symbols. An alphabetic writing system is more manageable than a logographic system that presents a picture for every word in a language (over 700,000 words in the case of English) or a syllabic system where symbols are used to represent all the syllables in a language (5,000 or so syllables in the case of English). In an alphabetic writing system, the reader needs to be aware of the phonemes in the speech stream (44 or so phonemes as in the case of English) and knowledgeable about the symbols that represent those phonemes in print. The numbers of phonemes and symbols are far fewer than pictures or syllables.

There are 5.5 million students who are learners of English. Approximately 80% of ELLs speak Spanish in the home (Cárdenas-Hagan, 2011). Although Spanish is often taught as if it were a syllabary language, Spanish, like English, is a language with an alphabetic writing system. Spanish is a romance language, with over 90% of the language originating from Latin. Although not classified as a romance language, approximately 60% of the words that constitute the English language originate from Latin. English not only shares similar words, but also shares common phonemes, letters, letter patterns, and morphemes

(i.e., meaning-carrying units, such as prefixes, suffixes, and roots) with Spanish. Understanding how one of these languages operates gives insights into how the other language operates. The realization of the commonalities in the phonemes and orthographic patterns accelerates the learning of how to read the second language. Recognition of morphemic commonalities further supports understanding of what is being read in the second language.

Brownsville Independent School District: A Successful Program for At-Risk Students and ELLs

A coalition of parents, teachers, school administrators, business partners, physicians, and university faculty named Brownsville READS educated itself about research-based reading instruction. The coalition worked to improve literacy to break the cycle of poverty in Brownsville, Texas, located on the Texas-Mexico border and having the dubious distinction of being the poorest city of its size in the US.

The Brownsville Independent School District (BISD), a district of 41,000 predominantly native Spanish-speaking, at-risk students, established the two-fold goal to improve literacy and promote bi-literacy for its student population. The district, a committed partner in Brownsville READS, did not assume that the primary language of these students would be used temporarily until English replaces it. The district assumed that these students not only would speak Spanish and English fluently, they would also be able to read and write both languages with equal facility and skill throughout their lifetimes. To reach its goal, the district provided teachers in the early elementary grades with professional development in Neuhaus' *Reading Readiness* and *Language Enrichment*, which enabled the teachers to introduce the language structures of both Spanish and English. The district's philosophy was to capitalize on these similarities. Explicit, multisensory, systematic instruction in one language provides valuable insights for learning the other language.

In kindergarten, students were taught in Spanish. For 45-60 minutes a day, these students were given explicit oral language instruction in English. In the fall semester of first grade, students were taught the structure of Spanish for reading and spelling while explicit instruction in English oral language continued. At the beginning of the second semester of first grade, students received explicit, systematic instruction in the structure of English for reading and spelling. As students learned about the structure of English, they were shown the similarities of phonemes, letters, letter patterns, and morphemes in Spanish. The procedures and terminology students learned for Spanish were familiar as they applied them to English. The district committed a facilitator on each campus who provided support and materials for the teachers.

Quantitative analyses of student achievement on state-mandated reading tests were reported in Carreker, et al. (2005, 2007). In these reports, ELLs who were given explicit

instruction in English in second grade longitudinally outperformed their peers who were not given the same explicit instruction in second grade. Anecdotally, the district also reported that the referral rate to dyslexia programs decreased. Additionally, the number of hours that referred students spent in the dyslexia labs decreased.

Literacy for All: Houston Independent School District

On August 11, 2012, the Houston Independent School District (HISD) unanimously approved a comprehensive literacy initiative with Neuhaus. The initiative directly addresses recommendations presented in the audit review of HISD's early language and literacy practices. The overarching goal of the initiative is the improved literacy achievement of students in general education classrooms, as well as those with dyslexia or other reading disorders.

Phases 1 and 2

The HISD initiative has multiple phases. To date, two phases have been approved and completed or started.

Phase 1 – September through May, 2012

- Provide all HISD elementary school principals (173) professional development to deepen knowledge of effective literacy instruction in order to facilitate the planning, implementation, and monitoring of effective literacy plans.
- Provide all teacher development specialists, K-12 literacy coaches, and special education program specialists (335) professional development to deepen knowledge of effective literacy instruction in order to support teacher implementation of effective literacy instruction in the classroom, and to monitor and provide ongoing professional development to meet teacher needs.
- Provide all K-3 general education classroom teachers (approx. 3,000) professional development to deepen knowledge of effective literacy instruction in order to plan literacy instruction that meets the needs of all learners.
- Provide Tier III K-12 teachers (approx. 300) professional development to deepen knowledge of effective literacy instruction in order to plan instruction for students with dyslexia or other reading disorders.

Phase 2 – June through December, 2012

- Provide facilitated online presentation modules on small group instruction to assist in bolstering differentiated instruction in the district and to promote sustainability of professional development.
- Provide professional development for reading tutors in K and Grade 1 to aid the prevention of reading problems.

- Provide targeted professional development for K-2 teachers whose students did not make expected gains on SAT-10.
- Provide targeted professional development for Grade 3 teachers whose students did not make expected gains on SAT-10.
- Provide advanced professional development for TIER III K-5 teachers.
- Provide professional development for Grade 4 and 5 teachers to deepen knowledge of effective literacy instruction in order to plan instruction that meets the needs of all learners.
- Provide professional development for Grade 6 and 9 teachers of struggling readers.

Common Ties

Neuhaus is not focused on a particular framework or methodology of bilingual education. We are focused on the transfer of skills from Spanish to English to promote bi-literacy within any framework. In terms of both spoken and written language, there are commonalities in that exist in Spanish and English that are the starting points and the guideposts for instruction. It is important for Spanish-speaking students learning English to understand that Spanish and English share similar principles, sounds, orthographic (letter) patterns, etymologies, and morphemes. Conversely, for English-speaking students learning Spanish, this understanding is also important. Understanding commonalities accelerates the learning of the second language, whether that language is English or Spanish.

A critical new class offered by Neuhaus Education to HISD bilingual teachers is *Celebrating Common Ties: Transitioning from Spanish to English*. This class equips bilingual K-5 teachers with knowledge of the sounds and letter patterns in Spanish and English that support students' accurate and automatic decoding in both languages. More than 300 teachers will participate in *Common Ties*.

Creating Literacy Leaders

The collaboration with HISD providing reading instruction for all kinds of learners is built, first and foremost, on the principles of effective reading instruction that is delivered by knowledgeable and skills teachers of reading. The initiative also includes the vital components of state standards and elements of whole-system reform (Fullan, 2010):

- State standards are designed to provide clear expectations of what students are to learn to prepare them for success in college and careers.
- Whole-system reform is coordinated leadership at all levels – the district, the school, and the classroom – that is focused on improving student achievement based on student performance data (Fullan, 2010).
- Effective professional development models are focused on teachers' individual needs as opposed to whole school in-service programs. Teachers' professional development is tied directly to student needs and outcomes.

All stakeholders are engaged in learning about 1) effective reading instruction, 2) state standards, 3) elements of whole-system reform (Fullan, 2010), and 4) new professional development models. In addition to understanding effective reading instruction and standards, the district and the school must be committed to elements or the big ideas of whole-system reform:

1. All children can learn
2. A small number of key priorities
3. Resolute leadership/Stay on message
4. Collective capacity
5. Strategies with precision
6. Intelligent accountability
7. All means all (Fullan, 2010, p. 4)

With all critical elements in place for twenty-first century learning, all students in HISD will learn and be poised for reading and academic success and full civic participation.

About the Neuhaus Education Center

Neuhaus Education Center is a nonprofit professional development institute founded in 1980 that employs 35 educators and support staff who are dedicated to preventing reading failure. We provide teachers professional development in research-based methods of literacy instruction because we believe the best prevention for reading failure is a knowledgeable and skilled teacher. We have devoted three decades to researching and developing comprehensive literacy solutions to prevent reading failure and invest teachers with the knowledge and skill needed to teach all students to read.

Neuhaus faculty members are published authors, are nationally-known experts on literacy and leadership, and have consulted with state departments of education and on national literacy initiatives. Staff members currently sit on national boards of organizations that promote explicit, systematic reading instruction.

More than 60,000 teachers have participated in our professional development classes – at the center, online, and onsite – to learn about effective reading instruction. These teachers are finding success in their classrooms. Each success means *better readers* with *brighter futures*.

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