Dyslexia and Teacher Preparation

Colleen E. Pennell

Department of Education

Carroll University

My background

Wisconsin Teacher Licenses: Regular Education, Reading Teacher, Reading Specialist

Worked in parochial, charter, and public education (K-12 system)

Worked as regular education teacher, reading teacher, and reading specialist

PhD in Literacy and Language

Currently work as Assistant Professor of Literacy Education at Carroll University

Co-chair Wisconsin Professor's of Reading (SIG of WSRA)

Research Agenda: Readers who struggle with literacy acquisition; classroom discourse and reading comprehension
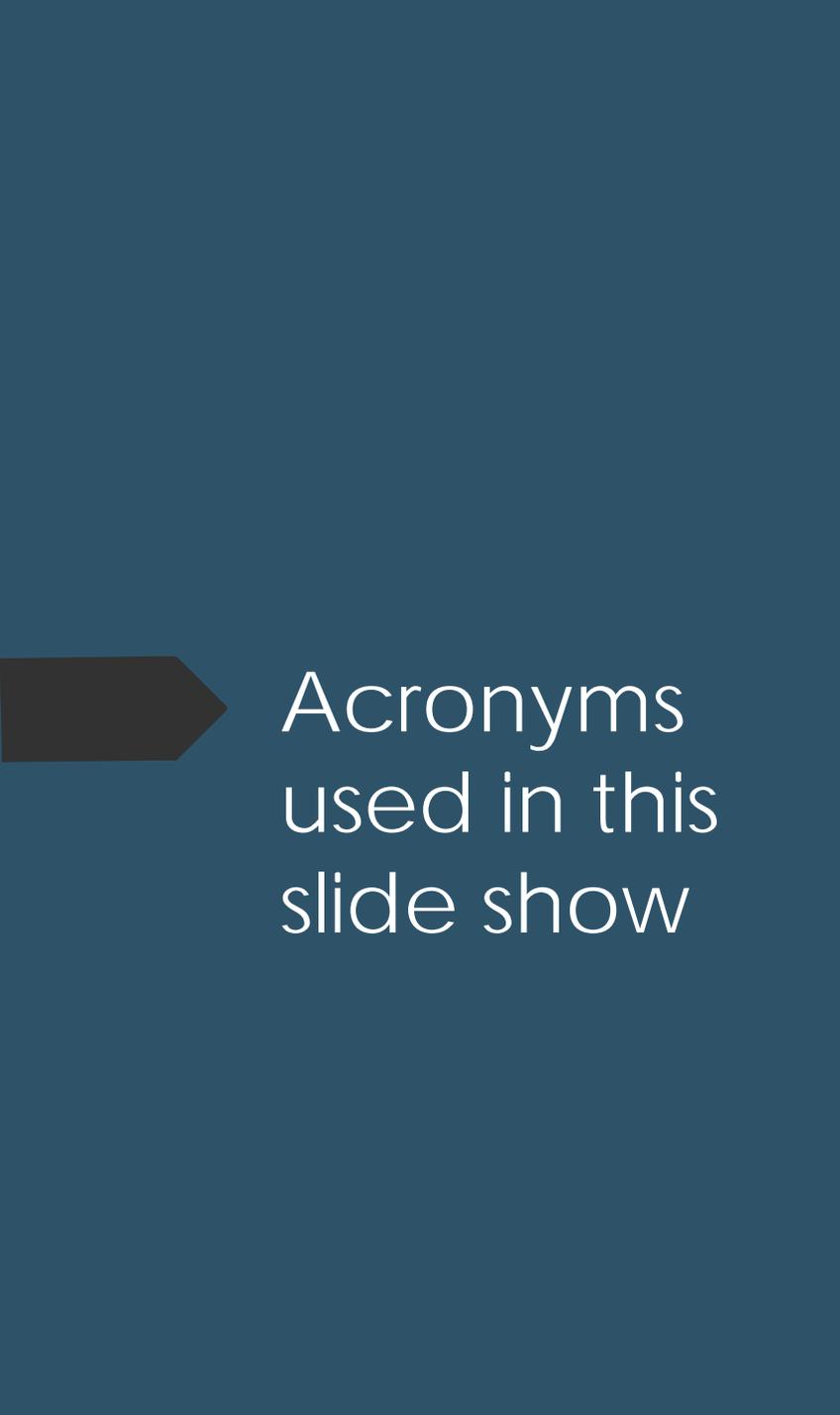
Acronyms used in this slide show

TPP's Teacher Preparation Programs

PST's – Preservice Teachers

RD – Reading Disability

DPI – Department of Public Instruction (Wisconsin)

FoRT – Foundations of Reading Test

IDA – International Dyslexia Association

Teacher Preparation Matters

Findings from a three year longitudinal study (Hoffman, et al., 2005):

- Participants in a quality teacher prep program transitioned more effectively than those in a less-effective program

- Teachers in effective programs utilized more robust instructional practices

- Participants in effective programs are better able to engage and differentiate for their learners

Subject matter knowledge and knowledge of various instructional strategies interact and are both important to achievement (Byrne, 1983; Goldhaber & Brewer, 2000)
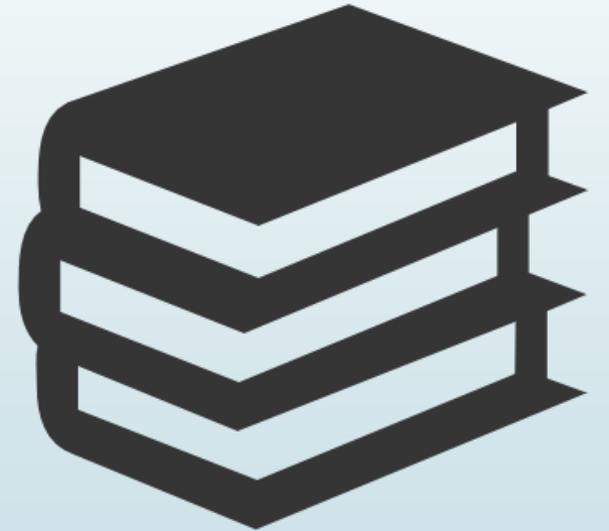
Teacher Preparation Programs that are Effective:

- Clear vision of excellent teaching
- Clear standards of practice and performance
- Curriculum rooted in research and theory of child development; focus on learning theory; taught in context
- Sustained clinical practice and field placements
- Facilitate self-identification of bias, assumptions; learn about others who may be different from themselves
- Relationships with school personnel and university faculty
- Performance assessments, action research connect learning to actual practice

(Darling-Hammond, 2013)

Preparing Literacy Educators: What Works

Exemplary literacy education programs include (Lacina & Block, 2011):

- Sequenced coursework tied to field experiences that begin during freshman year

- Candidates learn multiple instructional and assessment methods

- Spiraled literacy program with clear course sequence

- Collaboration between public school personnel and university faculty

- College/university administration provides leadership and institutional support

- Prolonged engagement in a field placement critical to developing knowledge of how to teach reading (Risko, Roller, Cummins, Bean, Block, Anders, and Flood, 2008)

- PST's who work with struggling readers in an intervention setting and focus on word learning, fluency, and comprehension, reported increased confidence and knowledge in teaching reading (Worthy & Patterson, 2001).

- Research suggests a positive effect strength when professors provide explicit modeling, side by side learning in both university classrooms and field placements (Risko et al., 2008)

PST's Need Knowledge of How Literacy is Acquired Not Training to Deliver a Specific Program

- **Qualities of Effective Emergent Literacy Classrooms**: high academic engagement, positive relationships, explicit teaching of skills, an emphasis on literature, sustained reading and writing time, matching tasks to readers' needs, encouragement of student self-regulation, classroom management skills, and cross-disciplinary connections (Pressley, et al. 2001)

- **Foundational Knowledge**: Understanding the National Reading Panel with an emphasis on assessment, instruction, and depth of knowledge. "...the NRP findings should not be used to dictate any oversimplified prescriptions regarding effective PA instruction..." (National Reading Panel, 2-7)

- **Theory**: Key theories of literacy acquisition (top-down vs bottom up vs interactionist; reader response theory, theories of language, etc.)

- **Assessment**: Understanding, using, and critiquing multiple assessment measures (formative assessments, PALS, Yopp-Singer, running records/miscue analysis, etc.)

- **Instruction** – Understanding multiple methods of instruction, applying diverse instructional strategies based upon assessment data, learning how to build positive relationships with children
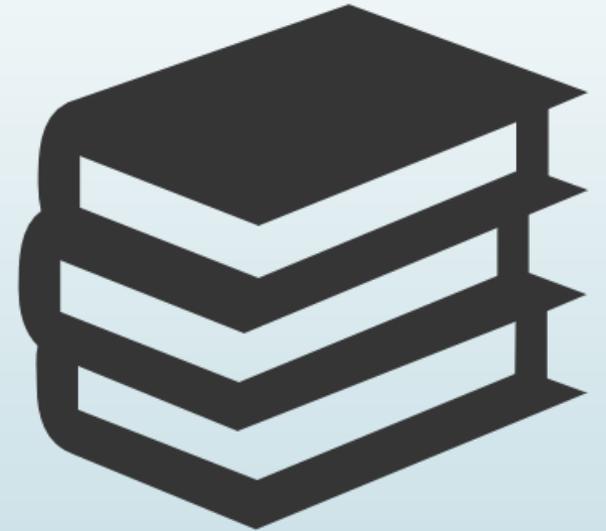
What PST's need to know: Educating the Whole Child

46 million children in the US experience violence, trauma, homelessness, or hunger. Research from the *Learning Policy Institute (2018)* suggests educators must understand the following:

1. *Development is malleable*: Brain develops most fully with positive socio-emotional connections

2. *Variability in human development is the norm, not the exception*: There is no one way to teach all learners. Effective instruction is personalized for the child.

3. *Human relationships are the essential ingredient that catalyzes healthy development and learning*: Healthy relationships with teachers and others can shield the negative effects of adversity and trauma.

4. *Adversity affects learning—and the way schools respond matters.*

5. *Learning is social and emotional, as well as academic.*

6. *Children actively construct knowledge based on their experiences, relationships, and social contexts.*

Darling-Hammond, L. and Channa M. Cook-Harvey (2018)

Why Learning to Teach is Complex:

Powerful Teacher Education: Lessons from Exemplary Classrooms (Darling-Hammond, 2012) states three difficulties in learning to teach:

- **Problem of Apprenticeship**: Undoing "teaching how I was taught" mindsets in PST's; preparing teachers for various contexts (urban, suburban, rural, etc.)

- **Problem of Enactment**: Helping PST's to not only think like a teacher but to act like one; to know and rely on multiple instructional strategies, relationship strategies, and assume positive dispositions

- **Problem of Complexity**:
  - "Teaching is never routine" (Lampert, 2001)
  - Multiple outcomes for each learner: socially, emotionally, academically
  - Teaching in diverse settings that may be different or new
  - Deep knowledge about the subject matter they are teaching

Dyslexia is Opaque…Expertise is Clear

- Dyslexia is a contested term; no agreed upon definition, cause, or approach to remediation (Gabriel, 2018)

- Diagnostic Statistical Manual excludes dyslexia (DSM-5, American Psychiatric Association) as verifiable neurobiological condition.

- Unclear prevalence of dyslexia abounds. 1 in 5 often stated by dyslexia organizations but no study to support statistic can be located.

- It is important for PST's to understand that RD includes difficulties with phonological processing, naming speed, oral language, comprehension.

- As such: Teacher prep must develop teachers to understand the developmental nature of reading and writing and recognize when a reader is not typically developing, how to assess, how to teach.

- The label of the reader is less important than the tools the teacher possesses to recognize and address what is happening for students who struggle with reading.

For example:

- The goal of instruction is to help children read words in the following ways (Ehri & McCormick 2004, Ehri, 2005):

  1. Decoding
  2. Analogy
  3. Prediction
  4. Sight

Thus, the goal of PST's is to develop a toolbox to of instructional methods that empower readers to use these strategies.

Likewise, PST's must know how to recognize and address the needs of readers with Specific Word Recognition Deficits, Specific Comprehension Deficits as well as Garden Variety Poor Readers (Spear-Swerling, 2004) .

There is no one way, one method, or one published program that is the silver bullet of literacy acquisition.

The Role of Graduate Education:
Reading Teacher and Reading Specialist Licenses

Understanding how to read research studies, how to evaluate them for rigor, how to design and implement research (action research)

Deepening knowledge of literacy theories and complexity of literacy instruction

Deconstructing educational policy

Deepening knowledge of teaching readers at risk of reading disability

Deepening awareness of the role of equity in education

Strategies for literacy coaching and leadership

Critical exploration of reading interventions and literacy curricula

Review and critique of literacy assessments

Creating a district-wide literacy program review

Wisconsin requires the following for Teacher Preparation

Phonics Requirements

- Licenses in early childhood education, elementary education, reading teacher, and reading specialist require completion of training in the teaching of reading that includes phonics. Phonics is the teaching of reading using the phonic value of letters, letter groups and syllables (retrieved from https://dpi.wi.gov/tepdl/licensing/types/teaching/information)

Universal Design for Learning – Federal law endorses UDL in preservice preparation of teachers. DPI recommends that TPP's adhere to developing pre-service competence with a UDL framework wherein:

- Teachers provide multiple ways of presenting information

- Learners are given multiple avenues to demonstrate their knowledge

- Teachers know and employ various strategies to engage learners in the content

Wisconsin Continuous Review Process for TPP's (yearly)

- Wisconsin DPI:
  - **Approves** teacher prep programs every five years
  - **Reviews programs every year** with liaison site visit, review of assessment data, review of status report compiled by the college/university approval contingent upon successful yearly audit
  - **Reviews assessment data** (EdTPA, FoRT, portfolio data)
    - Compares data year to year; monitors trends, provides feedback for improvement
- Beyond DPI:
  - Each college and university education program reports results of the yearly DPI review to their college/university administration

Wisconsin Foundations of Reading Test (FoRT)

- Successful passage required for licensure

- One Hundred multiple choice questions; Two essay questions

- Assesses candidate knowledge of:

  - Foundations of Reading Development (35% of weight)

  - Reading Comprehension (27% of weight)

  - Reading Assessment and Instruction (18% of weight)

  - Integration of Knowledge and Understanding: Essay questions (20% of weight)

- Test results reported programmatically and to university administration

…and yet, there are limitations to the FoRT

NOT ALIGNED TO WISCONSIN STATE STANDARDS

NO FEEDBACK PROVIDED TO TPP'S ON CANDIDATE'S PERFORMANCE ON ESSAY QUESTIONS (20% OF THE EXAM).

NO ITEM ANALYSIS PROVIDED TO SUPPORT CANDIDATES WHO FAIL

TPP'S UNABLE TO USE FORT DATA IN MEANINGFUL WAY TO IMPROVE METHODS COURSES.

Why not require TPP's to adopt IDA standards?

Should be a local choice. Currently, our TPP aligns to the following:

- InTASC standards (standards for teachers)
- Wisconsin State Standards (standards for students by grade level)
- Council for Exceptional Children
- National Association for the Educational of Young Children
- International Literacy Association (aligned to grad programs)
- All are comprehensive and encompass knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to teach all readers, including those at risk for reading disability

Other organizational standards inform TPP's yet too many to align to:

- International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE)
- National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)
- International Dyslexia Association (IDA)

InTASC Standards: Wisconsin PST's must present evidence of their competence in the following 10 Standards:

1. Learner Development
2. Learner Differences
3. Learning Environments
4. Content Knowledge
5. Application of Content
6. Assessment
7. Planning for Instruction
8. Instructional Strategies
9. Professional Learning and Ethical Practice
10. Leadership and Collaboration

Challenges facing TPP's

- Recruiting a diverse teaching force (Lindsay, Blom, and Tilsley, 2017)

- With existing mandates, focusing both TPP's and K-12 schools on Educating the Whole Child

- University systems: Cost of tuition; push to eliminate credits and graduate students in four years

- Expanded teacher licensing bands (PK-8) and (4-12)

- Wisconsin Teacher attrition: The most experienced teachers are leaving. 42% attrition rate for teachers with 15 years plus experience yet still 20% for those with less than three years (DPI: Teacher Turnover 2016-2017)

  - More demands/less incentives: new standards, new licensure rules, new curricula, new SPED policy changes, mandated assessments, union power shifts, school safety drills, decreased health and retirement benefits, low salaries, underfunded schools…just to name a few

Suggestions for the Committee

- Instead of adding more assessments or mandates, consider:
    - Ongoing Professional Development
    - Supporting teachers in the first three years of the profession with Teacher Induction Programs
    - Valuing the experience of seasoned educators so they remain in the profession
    - Eliminating Fast Track Teacher Prep Programs (that have no research to support their effectiveness); some don't require student teaching
    - Reviewing how Educator Effectiveness really works for districts – does it truly honor those who exceed or is it a formula with limits on who can be compensated?
    - Looking into the FoRT and how feedback is provided to candidates and TPP's
    - Creating resources for parents whose children struggle with reading
    - Ensuring that children in low-income settings are provided highly qualified teachers
    - Looking at the repercussions of new teacher licensing regulations which award "Lifetime Licenses" to teachers
    - Looking at the repercussions of proposed teacher licensing that will create broad (PK-8) licenses and broad (4-12) bands for secondary teachers

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