



The Professional Training of Pre-Service and In-Service Teachers Regarding Dyslexia and the Science of Reading

A Report from the Kansas Board of Regents – Council of Education Deans



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The Kansas Board of Regents Colleges/Schools of Education have developed an overview of the collective efforts to address the professional training of pre-service and in-service teachers regarding dyslexia and the science of reading. Three main themes, which are general summary statements that encapsulate our collective efforts, and selected examples from each institution (not an exhaustive list) are presented. It is hoped that this report will provide some context and insight about the work done to advance work within our state on the importance of meeting the needs of students with dyslexia, especially as it relates to teacher preparation and supporting our K-12 partners.

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Professional Development and Scholarship

Overview

Within the Regent Colleges/Schools of Education, initiatives to encourage and promote access to on-going professional development for faculty regarding dyslexia and the science of reading have been enacted. This has been a multifaceted approach, designed to deepen the knowledge base and professional practice of faculty so that they can better support students in educator preparation programs. Several faculty members have completed the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) professional development and facilitator trainings. The LETRS program, which is an International Dyslexia Association's accredited program, is designed to strengthen approaches of the fundamentals of reading instruction—phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, and language. The colleges have invested funding to support faculty members to participate in regional and national conferences focusing on the science of reading and dyslexia. Faculty have engaged in professional readings (including books, scholarly articles and research studies) centered on dyslexia and the science of reading, and have engaged students in expanded conversations on these concepts. The faculty of the colleges/schools have conducted planning sessions for the implementation of the science of reading into curricular and program enhancements based on professional expertise and insights gained in the aforementioned professional engagement activities. Additionally, faculty have conducted on-going research and scholarship centering on dyslexia and the science of reading.

Selected Examples

ESU – Seven faculty have completed or are in the process of completing LETRS training and 2 faculty completed LETRS facilitator training. This will help ensure integration of these concepts into instruction.

FHSU – Selected faculty have completed LETRS facilitator training participation to train additional faculty members in the science of reading. Faculty have attended conferences and contributed presentations on the science of reading.

KSU – Eight faculty attended the KSDE dyslexia training, along with 1 graduate student, who represented multiple programs (Elementary Education; Secondary ELA; Masters of Arts in Teaching; and Special Education).

PSU – Faculty have attended national conferences and engaged in professional readings on dyslexia instruction and have planned continued collaborative sessions to develop new instructional strategies into coursework. This will include integrating research-based identification and remediation strategies to provide high-quality and accurate assessments and successful interventions for children who have dyslexia and reading difficulties (such as those from the PSU Center for READing). Faculty research will continue to be incorporated to instructional practices as well.

KU – In literacy courses, faculty present information from the National Early Literacy Report, Reading Panel Report, and Institutional of Educational Sciences research reports and well as links to these resources. One faculty member served as Consultant to the Legislative Task Force on Dyslexia and served on a Task Force sub-committee, and worked with KU colleagues on professional learning.

WU – A faculty member has had original research on dyslexia and teacher training published in a peer-reviewed journal.

WSU – Faculty regularly attend professional conferences and engage in professional study on dyslexia and related reading disorders and include content from the Reading Panel report, the International Literacy Association and the Council for Exceptional Children. Faculty have also completed professional readings including works such as Kilpatrick's Essentials of Assessing, Preventing, and Overcoming Reading Difficulties and Essentials of Dyslexia.



Curricular Enhancements

Overview

Colleges/Schools of Education have been committed to a careful review of courses and programs for teacher preparation programs regarding dyslexia and the science of reading. The reviews have been conducted in two phases. The first phase identified elements of dyslexia instruction which were already embedded in existing course and program structure. These elements were examined at a deeper level to ensure the intentional emphasis was given to these concepts and to make any appropriate improvements. The second phase was employed to develop and integrate missing elements related to dyslexia instruction into courses. Course syllabi in targeted programs (Elementary Education, English/Language Arts 6-12, High Incidence Special Education, and Reading Specialist) were matched to the IDA standards. Additionally, guiding the reviews have been the central tenets from structured literacy, which includes these teaching principles: explicit instruction, diagnostic teaching, being systemic and cumulative – and these six elements: phonology, sound-symbol, syllables, morphology, syntax, and semantics. These critical elements have been integrated into alignment, development and revision initiatives ensuring all components are introduced and fully applied in each of the above-named programs. Science of reading and dyslexia focused activities, resources and experiences have been integrated and emphasized in courses. This commitment extends to the on-going cycle of improvement which is core to the programs in higher education and an expectation of our accreditation standards.

Selected Examples

ESU – Faculty have reviewed the undergraduate scope and sequence for literacy courses and have made changes in course content to include the science of reading and evidence-based reading strategies.

FHSU – For the reading specialist program, multiple courses are being updated to meet IDA standards and address structured literacy and the science of reading. Instructional activities have been incorporated to align with components of the KSDE dyslexia training teachers are receiving in their schools. Undergraduate literacy courses are being updated to meet IDA standards and address structured literacy and the science of reading. Informed by LETRS training, instructional activities have been incorporated to align with components of the KSDE dyslexia training teachers are receiving in their schools.

KSU – The course, EDEL 411 K-2 Literacy, which is required for all elementary education students, focuses extensively on the five pillars of reading as stated in the 2000 National Reading Panel Report, including work in oral language development, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Similar work is occurring across other programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

PSU – Faculty are developing rubrics for program assessments which are aligned to IDA standards. As an example of the many curricular improvements which have been made, there is now a focus on dyslexia screenings and how the evaluation results will inform all aspects of the curriculum. As a result, PSU has made curricular revisions in multiple courses in teacher licensure programs to address the dyslexia and revised reading standards.

KU – Undergraduate programs have purposely spent more time and attention on phonological awareness and phonics, modeling explicit teaching of these concepts, and creating opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in explicit teaching of these concepts. KU faculty have added or highlighted components related to dyslexia (e.g. science of reading, brain research, phonological processing, multisensory instruction).

WU – Direct instruction concerning ‘decodable text’ for early and emerging stages of reading development is discussed, modeled, and used in both ED 320, Teaching Reading, and ED 402, Teaching Struggling Learners, in order to deepen pre-service students’ understanding of grapheme-phoneme level relationships.

WSU – In addition to revising course syllabi to ensure alignment to the IDA Standards, courses were reviewed and revised to ensure inclusion of dyslexia content within each methods course. Each program includes courses with this content. More specifically, the Elementary Education program includes 3 courses specific to developing candidates’ knowledge of literacy assessment, literacy acquisition and literacy development in typical and atypical learners.



Standards, New Courses and Revised Programs of Study

Overview

Colleges/Schools of Education have been committed to developing and adopting teacher preparation standards related to dyslexia. This has been extended into the development of new/revised courses regarding dyslexia training. Faculty served on committees to revise reading standards and conduct crosswalk between reading and special education standards. New courses have been developed or existing courses re-imagined to address the need to develop a specialization in dyslexia and struggling readers. Several of these courses are embedded in existing programs for not only easy access but also as insurance of keeping this in training of future educators. Programs of study and courses have gone through curriculum mapping to ensure complete coverage of concepts related in dyslexia instruction. Program faculty have also mapped out plans to include dyslexia content within multiple courses—not just the literacy courses. Although literacy courses will have the majority of the content, other method courses (as applicable) incorporate lessons on determining and addressing best practices within dyslexia instruction as well as incorporating resources. Thus, colleges have built upon the state standards to create more rigorous program curricula. Faculty teams have contributed to the curriculum development process by creating clarifying support materials, such as curriculum maps and scope and sequence documents. Through both horizontal and vertical alignment, programs have ensured that instruction is aligned with the standards across all courses.

Selected Examples

ESU – Faculty in the reading specialist graduate program have updated course content to include the science of reading, structured literacy, and evidence-based reading strategies. ESU is piloting an online certificate program in dyslexia.

FHSU – Special Education – High Incidence began offering a new course, SPED 832 Teaching Reading in Special Education, this fall to address the updated reading standards. The course does include multiple assignments to demonstrate candidate proficiency in the reading standards.

KSU – Programs have reviewed and updated course content including the development of a non-credit short course on dyslexia taught in collaboration with a school partner. Moving forward, the college will examine

requiring this professional development experience for all licensure candidates.

PSU – A new course, SPED-862 General Education Curriculum for Students with High Incidence Disabilities, is an applied course to prepare teacher candidates to work with students who have high-incidence disabilities accessing general education content. A focus of the course includes working with dyslexia and struggling readers, and the course is aligned with IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards. Additionally, several faculty members served on the KSDE standards development committee to incorporate IDA concepts.

KU – In addition to addressing dyslexia/KSDE standards, faculty are making more explicit connections among courses (e.g., chapters and theories from a new textbook in an initial course will be used with other courses), aligning with CAEP expectations (e.g., DEI), and updating readings (e.g., Reading Research Quarterly's themed issue on the science of reading) – this approach is targeting required courses that cut across our four reading/literacy programs. KU made curricular revisions in multiple courses in the teacher licensure program to address the dyslexia and reading standards. One faculty member made recommendations for the KSDE Dyslexia Recommendation Committee related to elementary education. Finally, KU is developing a new online certificate program in dyslexia.

WU – The course, ED 402, Teaching Struggling Learners, which is required for all elementary education students, primarily focuses on literacy assessments and how assessment data is used to pinpoint students' reading needs. Once needs are determined, pre-service teachers are trained on how to address students' reading deficits.

WSU – Programs of study for the various majors include literacy courses, each of which have been aligned to the dyslexia standards. For example, the Reading Specialist program, a rigorous 18-hour graduate level (endorsement) program incorporates research-based practices for diverse reading profiles, including dyslexia. This program has been recently updated to ensure a focused study on the knowledge of diverse reading profiles, including dyslexia, through program planning to promote literacy development; assessment; and structured literacy instruction.