



DYSLEXIA ASSESSMENT AND THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER

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Presentation Overview

1. Definition of Dyslexia
2. Characteristics of Dyslexia
3. Pre-referral documentation
4. Factors that determine language of assessment
5. Assessment components
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Dyslexia Defined

“Dyslexia is a disorder of constitutional origin manifested by a difficulty in learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and sociocultural opportunities.”

TEC §38.003(d)(1)



2003 Definition of Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities. These difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction.



2003 Definition

Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experiences that can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

International Dyslexia Association, 2003



Characteristics of Dyslexia in Other Languages

- Current definitions are based on English speaking individuals
- Differences in orthographic systems and linguistic environments require variations of definition
- Orthographic Continuum
- Reliability of the Alphabetic Principal
 - Carla Proctor and Tammy Stephens



Orthographic Continuum of Alphabetic-Based Languages

More Opaque Languages

- One phoneme corresponds to several graphemes and one grapheme corresponds to several phonemes
 - English
 - French
 - Danish
 - Portuguese

More Transparent Languages

- Grapheme-phoneme correspondence is one-to-one
 - Spanish
 - Italian
 - Greek
 - Turkish

Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence

○ English

- The English language has 26 alphabet letters that represent from 40 to 45 phonemes
- There are 5 vowel letters and 15 vowel sounds
- There are many different patterns used to spell these vowel sounds

Grapheme-Phoneme Correspondence

- Spanish
 - Spanish has 27 letters that represent 24 phonemes according to the Real Academy
 - There are 5 vowel letters and 5 vowel sounds
 - They are always spelled the same except for *i* which is sometimes spelled with a *y*



Does Spanish Dyslexia Exist?

Although Spanish has an almost one-to-one correspondence between graphemes and phonemes, there are students who still have problems learning to read and write Spanish. **Speed** problems in reading are a clearer indicator than **accuracy** problems of students with reading disabilities.

Dr. Criselda Alvarado



Characteristics of Dyslexia in Spanish

- Reliable grapheme-to-phoneme coding
- Poor phonological processing skills cause delay in word retrieval
- Print language processing is significantly slower
- Deficits implicate fluency for intervention



Characteristics of Dyslexia in Spanish

- While decoding, word recognition, accuracy, and spelling are important dyslexia indicators in the English orthography, in more transparent orthographies, such as Spanish, it may have less influence. Poor reading rate and reading comprehension appear to be more decisive characteristics of Dyslexia for Spanish speakers.



Pre-referral Documentation

- RtI Documentation
- Reason for referral
- Vision, Hearing, and Health Screening
- Classroom teacher checklist to document behaviors of concerns
- Current intervention plan that addresses the teacher's concerns
- Parent interview and permission to test

Pre-referral, cont.

- Current (LPAC) report; LEP status
- Copy of permanent record card
- Copy of current report card
- Review of attendance history
- Academic Progress as measured on the most recent State and/or LEA assessments
- Student work/writing samples (L1, L2)

Regular Education Response to Intervention Documentation

- Student is receiving conventional reading instruction
- Student has received research-based, accelerated reading instruction that specifically targeted deficits identified through the TPRI/TEJAS LEE scores, and supplemented the conventional reading instruction. Evidence of interventions must be documented.
- Student demonstrates little to no progress despite research-based, accelerated reading interventions; evidence must be documented and specific to time, length, and type of instruction provided




Regular Education Rtl Documentation

- Student is below grade level in reading
- Student's lack of academic progress and difficulties are unexpected for cognitive ability
- Student exhibits characteristics of Dyslexia
- Student's difficulties and lack of progress are not attributed to such sociocultural factors as language differences, irregular attendance, and lack of experiential background

Factors that determine language of assessment

- Home Language Survey
- Student's first language
- How long has the student been in this country?
- Did the student attend school in another country?
- Current LPAC program placement recommendation

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- Has the parent signed a waiver of bilingual services?
 - What time per school day is spent in all-English?
 - What time per school day is spent in Spanish?
 - Has the student transitioned from Spanish to English reading? When?
 - Current Oral Proficiency tests (SELP/SSLP, TELPAS)
 - CALP level

Language Proficiency

- Two levels
 - **Basic Interpersonal Communications Skills (BICS)**
 - **Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)**



BICS

- Conversational proficiency
- Not related to academic achievement
- Necessary to function in everyday interpersonal contexts
- Universal across all native speakers
- ELL's attain within 1 – 3 years
- Cognitively undemanding
 - Gloria Lugo-Cooney

CALP

- Cognitively demanding
- Language proficiency in academic situations
- Dimensions of language related to literacy skills
- ELL's attain within 5 – 7, up to 10 years
 - Gloria Lugo-Cooney



CALP

- Second level of language proficiency
- Most important factor in determining the language of assessment
- Should also be the guiding factor to the language of instruction
- Is not equal to a SELP/SSLP score or language dominance (BICS)


Measuring CALP

- WJ III Ach tests 3, 4, 14 and 15; and BAT III Apr tests 3, 4, 14 and 15
- BVAT
- “Short BVAT” 1 – 31 (WJ III Cog test 1 and Bat Suplemento Diagnostico test 31 or Bat III Cog test 1 and WJ III Diagnostic Supplement test 31)
- WLMS-R
- WLPB-R



I have CALP, now what?

- Does it correlate with the current language of instruction?
- Is the student a PD? (Parent Denial)
- What is the student's Bilingual category? Does the classroom language of instruction adhere to the LPAC decision and does it meet the district's time and treatment guidelines?

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- What grade is the student in? Has the student had ample time to develop L1 reading skills before transition into English?
 - Look at the PRC. If the student has transitioned into English, what do his/her grades look like when they were being instructed in Spanish Language Arts?
 - Were the interventions sufficient and appropriate?
 - Is this a valid referral?

Language of Assessment

BILINGUAL CATEGORY	ENG	SPN
Monolingual Spanish		1
Bilingual, Spn. Dominance		1
Bilingual, Transitional -1 year	2	1
Bilingual, Transitional – 2 years	1	2
Bilingual , Transitional – 3+ years	1	
Non-LEP	1	
** Test in 1 first, then in 2		

Assessment Components

- ❖ Listening Comprehension
- ❖ Reading Comprehension
- ❖ Reading words in isolation
 - ❖ Real words
 - ❖ Nonwords
- ❖ Phonological awareness
- ❖ Phonological memory

Assessment components, cont.

- ❖ Rapid naming
- ❖ Letter knowledge (name and associated sound)
- ❖ Spelling
- ❖ Fluency/rate and accuracy
- ❖ IQ



English Assessment Instruments

1. Weschler Individual Achievement Test – II (WIAT)
2. Woodcock Johnson Tests of Achievement – III (WJ-III)
3. Test of Word Reading Efficiency (TOWRE)
4. Test of Written Spelling – 4 (TWS-4)



English Assessment Instruments

5. Gray Oral Reading Test – 4 (GORT-4)
6. Comprehensive Test of Phonological Processing (CTOPP)
7. Oral and Written Language Scales (OWLS)
8. Test of Nonverbal Intelligence – 3 (TONI – 3)
9. WISC IV Nonverbal Intelligence
10. Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, 2nd edition (K-TEA II)

Spanish Assessment Instruments

1. Batería III-Pruebas de Habilidad Cognitiva
2. Batería III-Pruebas de Aprovechamiento
3. Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, 3rd edition (TONI-3)

Target Area

Subtest

Comprensión Oral (Listening
Comprehension)

Batería III APR, Subtest 15

Comprensión de Lectura
(Reading
Comprehension)

Batería III APR, Subtests 9,
17

Identificación de Letras y
Palabras (Word
Identification)

Batería III APR, Subtest 1

Target Area

Subtest

Análisis de Palabras (Word Attack)

Batería III APR, Subtest 13

Integración de Sonidos,
(Phonological Awareness-Grades 1-2)

Batería COG, Subtest 4

Discernimiento de Sonidos
(Phonological Awareness-Grades 3-6)

Batería III Apr. Subtest 21

Target Area

Subtest

Memoria Para Palabras
(Phonological Memory)

Batería III COG,
Subtest 17

Rapidez en la identificación
de dibujos (Rapid
Naming)

Batería III COG,
Subtest 18

Fluidez en la Lectura
(Reading Fluency)

Batería III APR,
Subtest 2

Ortografía
(Spelling)

Batería III APR,
Subtest 7

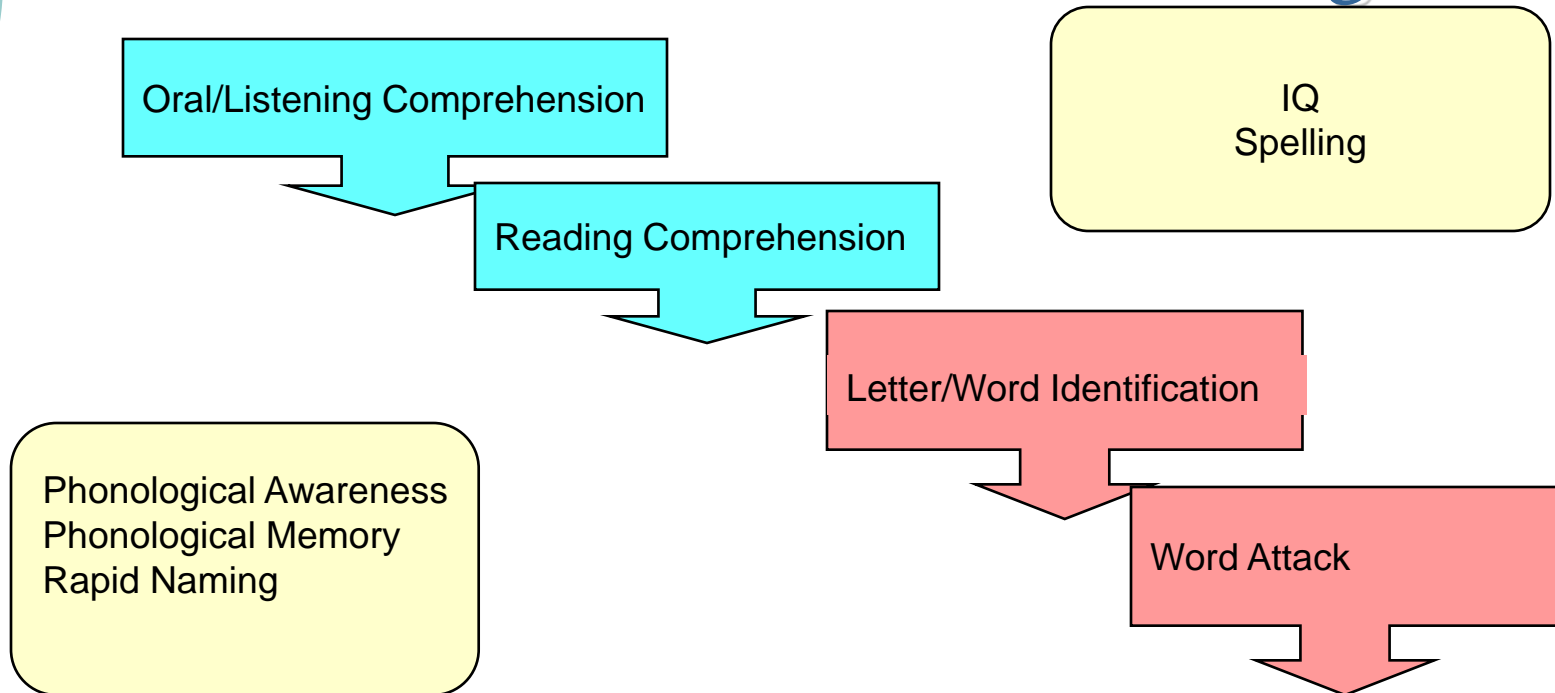


Factors Affecting Results

- Age of Student
- Reading Recovery
- Previous Intervention/s
- Student's "Bilingualism"

Dyslexia Testing Profile

Testing Profile





Interpretation Issues

- When a bilingual student has dyslexia, the characteristics of dyslexia must be manifested in both languages
- A student is not considered to have dyslexia if he or she exhibits characteristics in one language and not the other

Dr. Criselda Alvarado



Interpretation Issues

- To appropriately interpret test results, the committee of knowledgeable people must also take into account
 - Educational history
 - Linguistic background
 - Affective factors
 - Socioeconomic issues
 - Anything else that can impact learning
- It is crucial that the identification process includes a wide-range of information and is NOT based solely on test results



Interpretation Issues

- Did the student start to show the phonemic problems when they were in the stage of transitioning into English?
 - *Having difficulties in phonics or decoding when a student is in this transitional stage is common. The student should not be considered as possibly having dyslexia.*

Interpretation Issues

- Is the ELL mixing the sounds from their native language with the sounds of English language?
 - *An example of this would be when a student whose native language is Spanish and he sees the letter "i" in an English word. He decodes this /i/ as long vowel e. He is using the Spanish sound for the letter. This is not an example of a student with dyslexia.*



Interpretation Issues

- Does the student have difficulty in class when asked to do rhyming, locating beginning-middle-ending sounds, or substituting sounds?
 - *You will need to investigate if this student has been given direct instruction in how to do these types of exercises. Be sure the student has had repeated experiences and/or interventions in the cognitive processes and steps it takes to understand how to complete these types of tasks before you consider him/her as having dyslexia.*

Interpretation Issues

- Do the phonemic difficulties occur only in the English language?
 - *A student with dyslexia will have the same difficulty in decoding problems in both their native language and English. Dyslexia does not just occur in English. Remember dyslexia is a language-based disorder that results in insufficient phonological processing. For a student to be considered as having dyslexia, it MUST be seen in the native language.*

Implications for Assessment

Difficulties in the other languages are often only of academic interest, though knowledge of the differences compared to English may be useful. Linguistic background may explain some difficulties.

By understanding the specific difficulties, strengths and weaknesses of the individual child, and by developing an individual education plan based on their learning style, it is possible to ensure that every individual is given an opportunity to achieve their potential. This does not mean that we have all of the answers. However, it does mean that we can go a long way towards helping the bilingual dyslexic individual, provided we have an open mind, and ask the right questions, such as why is this individual having difficulties in this specific language.

It would be inappropriate to use a test battery designed for the diagnosis of dyslexia in English with children in other language contexts.

Ian Smythe



Program Recommendations

- BISD implements the Neuhaus Basic Language Skills Program for identified Dyslexia students who require English intervention.
- BISD implements the Esperanza Program for identified Dyslexia students who require Spanish intervention.



For ELL's who continue to require Spanish reading instruction

“A child cannot learn to read a language which he cannot speak. It is therefore imperative to provide intensive oral English classes for all Spanish-speaking children of elementary school age. The dyslexic Spanish-speaking child should be taught to read in Spanish first whenever possible.”

Lillian Strong



Program Recommendations

- A student who has been tested in English and demonstrates characteristics of dyslexia will be served with the Neuhaus Program
- A transitional student who has been tested in English and demonstrates characteristics of dyslexia will be served with the Neuhaus Program



Program Recommendations

- Students tested in Spanish and identified with Dyslexia will be served with the Esperanza
- Students who attend the Spanish Dyslexia Lab will complete the Esperanza program and the Esperanza Transition Lessons before being placed in the Neuhaus Program

Reflection

**...Let no child be demeaned,
nor have his or her wonder diminished,
because of our ignorance or inactivity.
Let no child be deprived of discovery
Because we lack the resources
to discover his or her problem.
Let no child – ever – doubt self or mind
because we are unsure of our commitment.**

Larry B. Silver

Q & A

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