

Dear Legislators,

I am the mother of a dyslexic, and representative the 20% of children in Oregon Schools who have been failed by the current system.. Every one of my child's teachers were not properly properly, which became apparent during one of our IEP meetings when the teacher was asked about the reading program or methodology she was using, for which she responded. "Well, a little of this and a little of that". It got worse with the SPED teachers, of which my son had 5 during his K-8 schooling! When I brought up dyslexia, she said she could go to Goodwill and get some Phonics books!

It was so obvious, that these women had no idea what they were doing when it came to reading instruction. Turns out my experience is actually backed up by scientific data!

Let's review some history...In 2000, the National Reading Panel (NRP) examined scientific evidence about beginning reading practices that work to prevent many reading problems and to maximize reading outcomes, even for students with reading disabilities. The NRP findings FORM THE BASIS for all effective beginning reading instruction: the teaching of explicit and systematic phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. These are called the BIG 5. The NRP findings were prominently cited in both the No Child Left Behind Act and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

Now let's look at some current data;

Studies were done in 2015 by the National Center for Teacher Quality of over 1100 institutions, in which 99% of new teachers are trained, only to discover that 29% of courses in early reading included 4 of the 5 of the BIG 5! ONLY 29%!!!! That means that 71% of these institutions DO NOT TEACH the BIG 5! Special Education fared even worse. In the journal, Scientific Studies of Reading (2012), College Professors were not even able to tell you what the BIG 5 was, and less than 50% were able to define phonological awareness, and only 29% knew that "frogs" had 2 morphemes. Their graduate students did even worse on these surveys. TEACHER KNOWLEDGE is CRITICAL.

Children need explicit **systematic structured language**, NOT language experience, whole language and literature-based instruction. It is clear that college professors are NOT following the BIG 5. WHY? It is clear. These professors were not put through the rigors of the BIG 5, and therefore, did not pass it onto their graduate students, and they didn't pass it onto their graduate students when they got a teaching gig at a college, and the problem perpetuates itself, as it has done for last 50 years.

Turns out there are now only 25 colleges that are actually following the THE BIG 5, and OREGON has NONE!

So, what do we do? Do we beg the professors with tenure to change their ways, and keep our fingers crossed?, or DO WE legislate the changes needed to teach and maintain a literate society. The answer to this dilemma is in your hands.

For the past 20 years, our organization has trained teachers and tutors in the BIG 5. Every teacher who has gone through our program has said "I wish they had taught me this in college"! Followed by "Why didn't they teach this to us?"

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*I am not interested in "well-intentioned" teachers. I am interested in WELL-TRAINED teachers.
We were all humans, until race disconnected us, religion separated us, politics divided us and wealth classified us. - Banksy*

Without Dyslexics-We would not know a lightbulb, plane, helicopter, telephone, antibiotics, or the cotton gin to name a few.

