How NCTQ scores the Early Reading Standard

Standard and indicators

Data used to score this standard

Evaluation of elementary and special education programs on Standard 2: Early Reading uses the following sources of data:

- Syllabi for all required courses that address literacy instruction
- Required textbooks in all required literacy coursework

Who analyzes the data

One reading subject-specialist evaluates syllabi using a detailed scoring protocol from which this scoring methodology is abstracted. Ten percent of syllabi are randomly selected for a second evaluation to assess scoring variances.

Scope of analysis

Scores of **undergraduate** and **graduate** teacher preparation programs on early reading are based on examination of syllabi and required textbooks in coursework that is deemed relevant because it addresses the essential components of early literacy instruction in whole or in part.[1] (A discussion of the use of syllabi and textbooks for analysis of course content is provided here.) Unlike the evaluation process for some other content standards, no distinction is drawn between undergraduate and graduate programs.

Syllabi are evaluated for their instruction on each of five *components* essential for early reading identified by the National Reading Panel (2000): phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension.[2] Analysts score syllabi based on coverage in lectures and elements of accountability (assessments, writing assignments or actual teaching practice) dedicated to each of the components. The scores in each of these areas are proportional to the coverage. For example, an essential component receives minimal credit for lecture coverage if it is a part of a single lecture and full lecture credit if it is the focus of two lectures.[3]

All required textbooks are also reviewed by reading experts to evaluate their treatment of the five components essential for early reading. Ratings of reviewed reading textbooks are provided here.[4]

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[1] In the case of **Illinois,** for IHEs that did not provide documents for evaluation for this *Review*, analyses of syllabi and textbooks developed for NCTQ's review of Illinois teacher preparation (2010) were incorporated into the current analyses.

[2] Textbook reviewers evaluate texts for comprehensive, accurate, research-based coverage of each of the five components of effective reading instruction looking for: 1) accurate information and examples, 2) discussion of assessment of students' acquisition of the components, and instruction on each using proven teaching methods.

[3] Each component can earn a maximum of nine points for a course (apportioned equally across its coverage in required texts, lectures, and accountability elements).

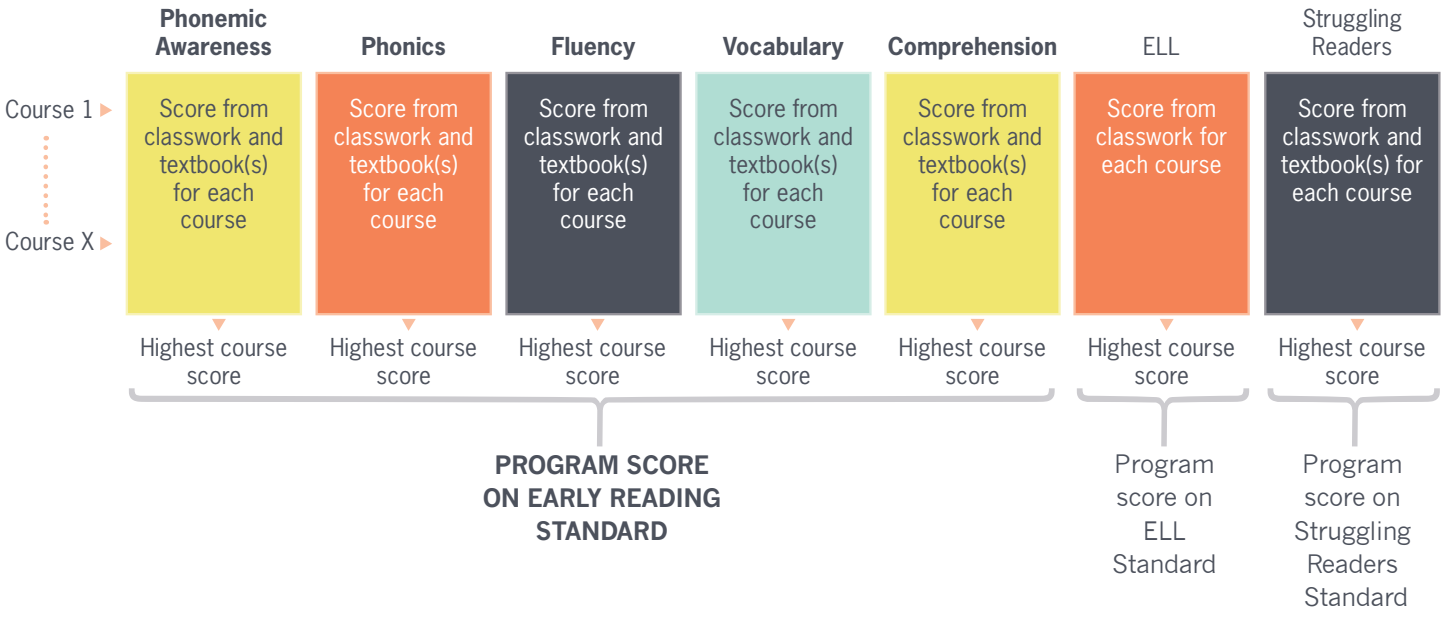
[4] Note that in previous evaluations of reading coursework in earlier field studies, we obtained and evaluated collections of articles compiled by instructors and provided to teacher candidates in lieu of textbooks; we no longer do so because of the belief (expressed in Indicator 2.2) that textbooks can and should best support effective reading instruction.

We have refined our methodology from earlier evaluations of instruction on reading to more accurately and appropriately address a certain limited category of texts, specifically assigned texts that are well aligned with scientifically-based reading instruction, but do not cover any of the essential components in sufficient depth to support course lectures and assignments. Such texts are generally resource or reference guides, which while useful, generally serve to provide an introduction to key topics; Put Reading First is probably the best known and most widely used example of texts in this category. The methodology for the *Teacher Prep Review* rates these texts as "acceptable," but does not award credit for all components (as generally would be awarded for an "acceptable core" text) or for one or more individual components (as generally would be awarded for an "acceptable supplemental" text).

In accordance with Indicators 2.1 and 2.2, scores from syllabus and textbook reviews are combined into a course score for each of the five components;[5] the highest course score for each component—in any course—is used for the program component score.

Overall program scores are proportional to the number of program component scores adequately addressed in the program.[6]

Evaluating reading coursework for the EARLY READING, English Language Learners and Struggling Readers Standards



[5] A course could receive an "unclear" score if the combination of information relating to lectures, assignments, assessments and teaching practice does not permit evaluation.

[6] "Adequately addresses" means at least one course earned at least five of the possible nine points for the component. A program that adequately addresses all five of the essential early reading components meets the standard.

Common misconceptions about how analysts evaluate the Early Reading Standard:

- *Any required reading course is relevant to this standard.* Every required course that addresses reading or literacy is screened by the analysts to determine relevance for this standard. Required courses that do not specifically address the five essential components—for example, courses that focus exclusively on the history and genres of children's literature—are irrelevant for this standard and are not evaluated.

- *Course objectives or standards mapping are interchangeable with specific lectures, written assignments, assessments or practice teaching.* Many syllabi laudably include objectives and goals for a course; however, the scoring protocol for this standard requires reviewers to look for specific instructional plans (lectures, writing assignments, assessments, practice teaching) that implement those objectives. In other words, an objective with no supporting texts, lectures, assignments or practice teaching is not sufficient.

How a program earns strong design

Evaluation of a program for strong design entails a check that it achieves a score of 8·9 on all five components of effective reading instruction and all required textbooks are rated "acceptable."

An alternate scoring process if data are not provided

Because elementary preparation is critical to ensuring that elementary and special education teacher candidates are competent to enter the classroom, NCTQ could not allow the lack of cooperation on the part of IHEs to place them out of the reach of evaluations on this standard. To that end, a means of evaluating elementary and special education programs on this standard using imputation was devised after extensive field work.[7]

This imputation process relies on the following sources of data:

- Syllabi for one or more of the required courses that address literacy instruction
- Required textbooks in all required literacy coursework from those syllabi
- Listings in IHE bookstores of required primary textbooks in required early reading courses for which syllabi were not available

The fundamental difference between the two scoring approaches is that the course scores produced by imputation for courses in which no syllabi are available rely on the textbook evaluations only. These imputed course scores are used as outlined above in determining the overall program scores.

Scores produced by imputation are reported as ●* (3.5 on a 0-4 scale) or ◔* (1 on a 0-4 scale).

Any program that could not be evaluated by either the standard scoring process or the above process was removed from the sample.

[7] We estimate that in 70 percent of programs, imputation produces the same program scores as evaluation with complete data.

Examples of what satisfies or does not satisfy the standard's indicators

Coverage of five components of effective reading instruction (Indicator 2.1)

✔ · fully satisfies the indicator	✘ · does not satisfy the indicator
The program's coursework lectures, written assignments and practice adequately cover phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. (Assessment is also evaluated for the standard, but programs are not rated on this component of instruction.) The following examples are drawn from a composite of syllabi from different courses and programs: **Phonemic awareness:** Lectures: ■ *Meta-linguistic awareness* ■ *Phonological awareness* ■ *Phonemic awareness: definition/components* ■ *Phonemic awareness instruction* ■ *Phonemic awareness assessment* Practice: ■ *Research Article Reviews: Candidates will read, summarize, evaluate and propose instructional applications of the information from selected peer-reviewed research articles on the following topics: Literacy and Health; Phonemic Awareness.* ■ *Phonemic Awareness Activity: Candidates will design a phonemic awareness activity that explicitly teaches a phonemic awareness* ■ *Phonics/ Phonemic Awareness Instruction: Candidates will use assessment data, the MLAF and other standards to develop and teach an explicit phonics/phonemic awareness lesson to a student.*	The program's coursework covers only one or none of the components of effective reading instruction or the coverage of the component is inadequate. Examples: ■ *The concept of phonemic awareness, found in lectures, assignments, tests, or teaching practice may be countered by its context if it is clearly associated with* printed *material.* ■ *A phonics lecture may be associated with an assignment in which candidates are directed to write and teach an "embedded phonics lesson using authentic literature" a method of teaching phonics that is not SBRR.[8] Given the context, the lecture would not receive phonics credit.* ■ *If the concept of "comprehension" appears in the context of non-SBRR instructional strategies, such as "shared reading" or "literature circles," it would not be credited.*

[8] SBRR stands for "Scientifically Based Reading Research."

Phonics:

Lectures:

- *Phonics*

Practice:

- *Lesson Plan, Presentation & Reflection: You will design one lesson plan using the Hunter model incorporating one of the following topics: onset and rime, word segmentation, syllabification, phoneme isolation, phoneme identity, phoneme categorization, phoneme deletion, phoneme addition or phoneme substitution or a pre-approved subject if your certification area is the Middle Childhood Generalist. This lesson plan will be presented to the class as if you were teaching it to a class of students of the grade level you hope to teach, and it must include differentiation.*

Fluency:

Lectures:

- *Developing Fluent Readers*
- *Fluency—Differentiate word recognition, word identification and fluency*

Assessment:

- *Students will be required to complete a final examination. The final exam will be in written essay format. Students will be asked to reflect on the major tenants of literacy development (phonemic awareness, phonics, **fluency**, vocabulary and comprehension) and describe how each of these influences the student's instructional practices in his or her designated certification area (PK-4; 4-8).*

Practice:

- *Using a basal reading series, students are required to develop, implement, assess and modify a comprehensive lesson plan incorporating the following literacy components: phonemic awareness, phonics, **fluency** and comprehension.*
- *Students are required to demonstrate an understanding of the following literacy components, using a variety of texts, by teaching the following mini-lessons (informally) during class in small-group settings:*

    1. *Phonemic awareness*
    2. *Phonics*
    3. ***Fluency***
    4. *Vocabulary*
    5. *Comprehension*

Vocabulary:

Lectures:

- *Making Words My Own*
- *How Well Do I Know It?*
- *Dictionary Day. Multisyllabic Words*

Graded Writing Assignments:

- *Students in this course will plan and organize effective reading instruction based on their growing knowledge and understanding of:*

    a. *Phonemic awareness*

    b. *Phonics*

    c. *Fluency*

    d. ***Vocabulary***

    e. *Text comprehension*

- *Teaching Notebook*
  *You will submit a teaching notebook twice during the semester: **Vocabulary**, Fluency & Comprehension*

Practice:

- *Reading Component Project: Students will present a lesson plan to their peers in each of the component areas:*
  - *Lesson 1—phonemic awareness*
  - *Lesson 2—phonics*
  - *Lesson 3—**vocabulary***
  - *Lesson 4—fluency*
  - *Lesson 5—comprehension*
- *Vocabulary Teaching Practice*

Comprehension

Lectures:

- *Chapter 2 – Teaching Comprehension*
- *Intro – Comprehension Strategy Lesson*
- *Graphic Organizers & Thinking Maps*
- *Chapter 5 – Mediating Expository Text Structures and Common Access*
- *Chapter 5 – Mediating Expository Text Structures and Common Access Features (cont).*
- *Intro – Content Area Expository Text Structure Lesson*

Writing Assignments:

- *The student will complete 10 assignments directly related to the course content, i.e., reading guides, research article critiques, case studies.*
- *The student will develop and present four content area literacy strategy lessons: comprehension strategy, vocabulary strategy, expository text structure strategy and visual literacy strategy.*

Practice:

- *Comprehension Strategy Lesson Presentations*

Textbooks support effective reading instruction (Indicator 2.2)

✔ · fully satisfies the indicator	✘ · does not satisfy the indicator
The program's two required literacy courses require the following textbook: Courses 1 and 2: *Literacy Instruction for All Students* (Gunning, 8th ed.) Note: This textbook is categorized as an "acceptable core" textbook. Course 1 also requires *Put Reading First: The Research Basis for Teaching Children to Read, Kindergarten Through Grade 3* (Armbruster and Osborn, 3rd ed.), but this is categorized as "acceptable overview" since it is a research summary and not a textbook focused on reading instruction.	The program's two literacy courses require the following textbooks: Course 1: *Literacy for the 21st Century: A Balanced Approach* (Tompkins, 5th ed.) Note: This textbook does not support effective reading instruction on any of the five components. Course 2: *Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension for Understanding and Engagement* (Harvey and Goudvis, 2nd ed.) Note: This textbook supports effective reading instruction on comprehension only.