

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a yellow top, smiling as she looks at a book held by a young girl with curly hair and a white headband. The background is blurred, suggesting a classroom or library setting. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

TEACHER PREP REVIEW

Strengthening Elementary Reading Instruction



National Council
on Teacher Quality

Far too many students aren't learning to read.



37%

of all 4th grade students are
BELOW BASIC on NAEP Reading

Historically marginalized students suffer most from
lack of access to strong reading instruction



Black students score
BELOW BASIC



Hispanic students
score BELOW BASIC



English language
learners score
BELOW BASIC



Students with
disabilities score
BELOW BASIC

Giving teachers the knowledge and skills they need to teach reading effectively is fundamental for **improving life outcomes for all children** and **reversing historical patterns of inequity.**

What is scientifically based reading instruction and how does NCTQ measure it in teacher preparation programs?

NCTQ engaged in a two-year revision process with the field to determine how to evaluate teacher prep programs on preparing aspiring teachers in effective literacy instruction.



An **Expert Advisory Panel** of researchers and practitioners guided the content of analysis.



A **Technical Advisory Group** of measurement experts advised on the methodology.



A **public comment period** solicited feedback from faculty, state and district leaders, researchers, and advocacy organizations.

The revision sought to **keep pace with changes in the field**, to recognize that children's reading proficiency continues to fall short, and to facilitate a transparent and rigorous process that is inclusive of feedback from external stakeholders.

NCTQ looks for clear evidence that aspiring teachers learn about each of the five core components of scientifically based reading instruction through four different instructional approaches.

Phonemic Awareness

The ability to focus on and manipulate the individual phonemes in spoken words

Phonics

The relationship between the sound of spoken words and the individual letters or groups of letters representing those sounds in written words

Fluency

The ability to read a text accurately and quickly while using phrasing and emphasis to make what is read sound like spoken language

Vocabulary

Knowledge about the meanings, uses, and pronunciation of words

Comprehension

Constructing meaning that is reasonable and accurate by connecting what has been read to what the reader already knows and thinking about all of this information

MEASURED BY

Instructional Hours

Course time dedicated to teaching the core components or assessing students in the core components

Objective Measures of Knowledge

Includes tests, quizzes, and written graded assignments

Background Materials

Textbooks, articles, videos, or other materials identified in a "required reading" section

Practice/Application

Practice providing instruction, in a simulated or real classroom setting, or practice giving an assessment

In addition, NCTQ analyzes the extent to which programs prepare candidates to teach a range of students with diverse needs in learning to read.

English language
learners

Struggling readers
(including students
with dyslexia)



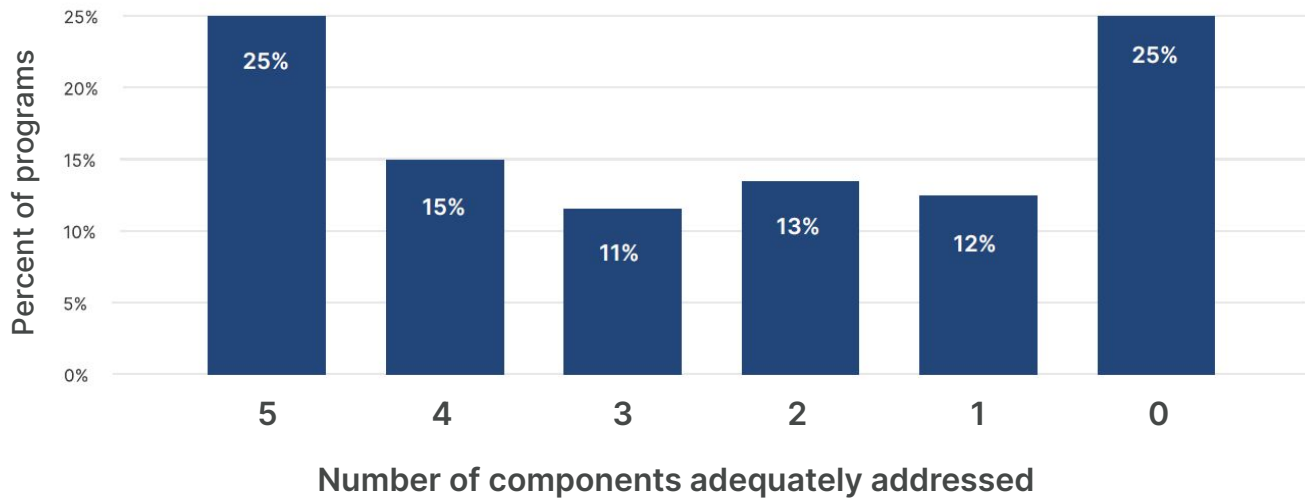
Speakers of English
language varieties

After over two years of deep engagement with the field, key changes to the NCTQ analysis and evaluation of programs include:

- ✓ Increased expectations for the **amount of instructional time** programs devote to each of the five core components
- ✓ Reviewing programs for the presence of **reading practices contrary to the research**, such as three-cueing and running records
- ✓ Separately evaluating the opportunities programs provide for candidates to **practice instruction** in each component

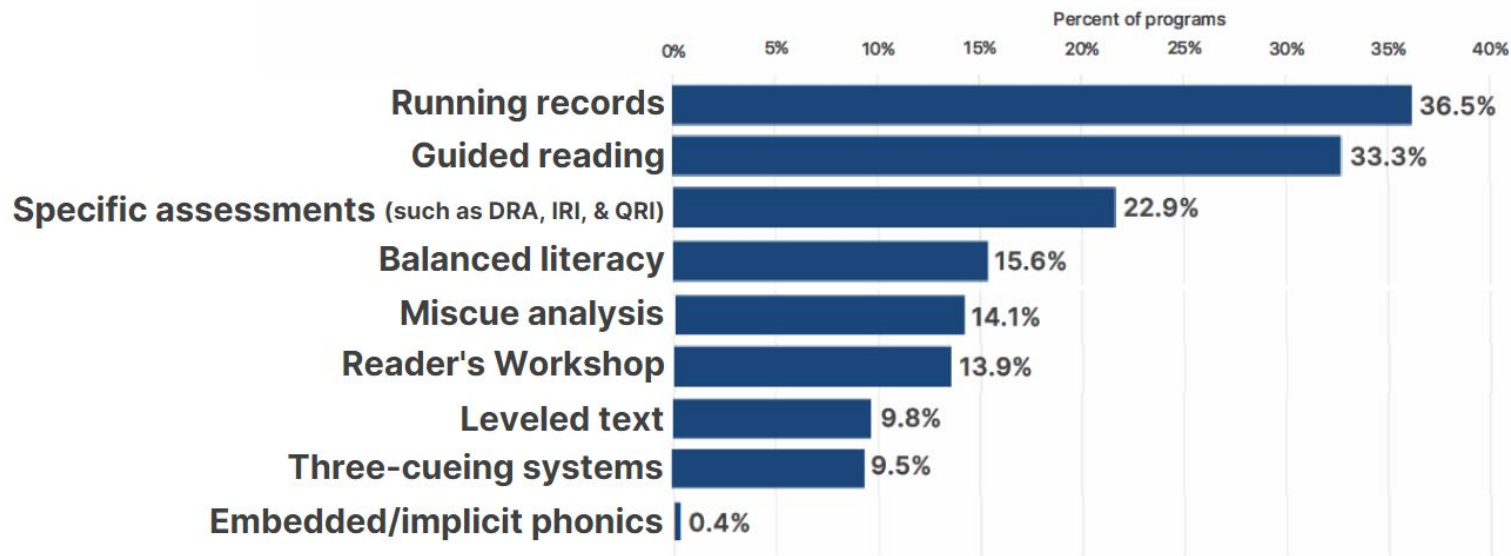
Summary of 2023 National Findings

Only 25% of programs adequately address all five core components of reading instruction.



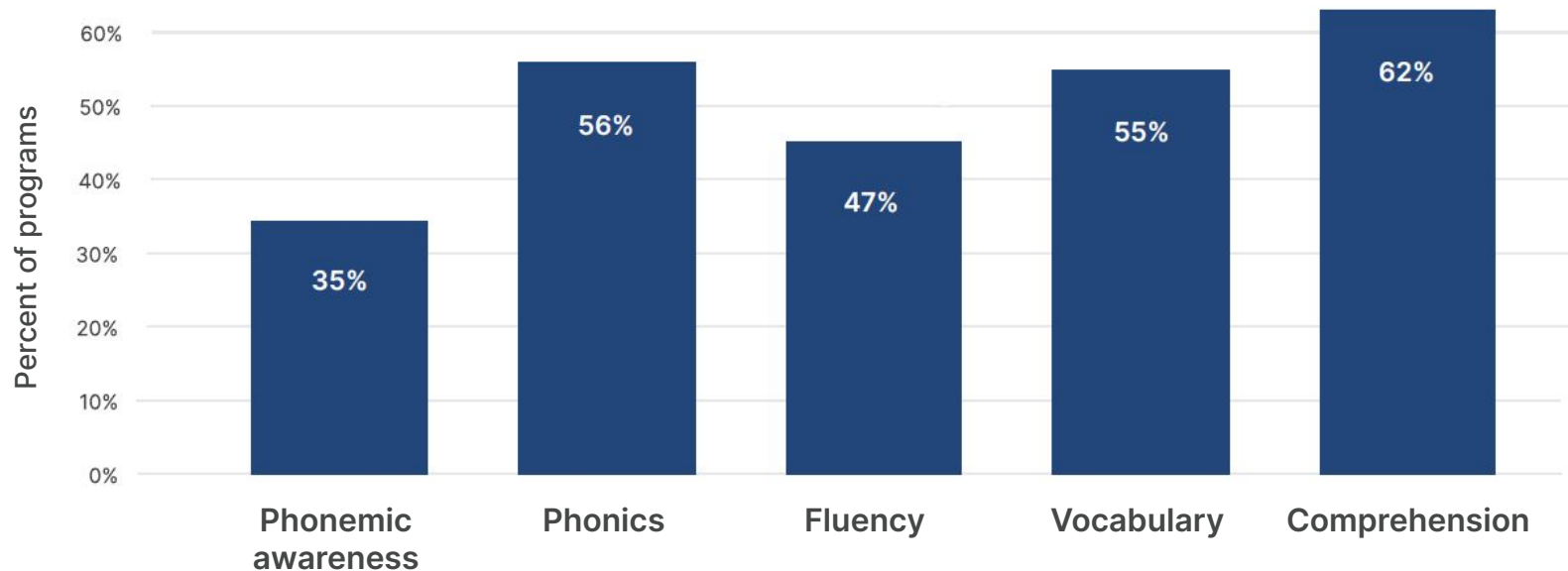
Covering every component is critical:
Programs should cover each component through **instruction, background materials, objective measures of knowledge, and practice.**

Over 40% of programs are still teaching multiple practices contrary to the research.



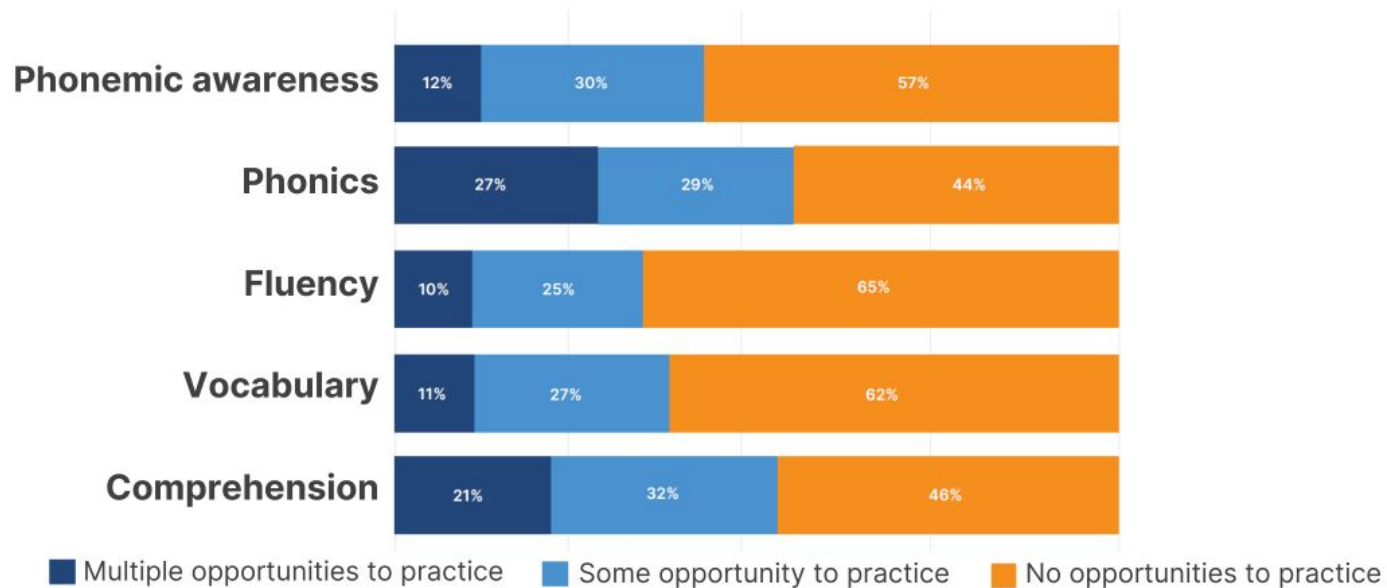
When programs teach practices not supported by research, it legitimizes ineffective methods, risks confusing aspiring teachers, and may lead new teachers to implement debunked practices that may **inhibit the progress of many students.**

Phonemic awareness receives the least attention across programs.



Two out of three teacher preparation programs fail to adequately address phonemic awareness.

One in three programs do not provide any practice opportunities connected to the core components.



Although 80% of stakeholders believe practice is essential, teacher preparation programs aren't creating specific, component-focused practice opportunities.

States can improve the quality of teacher preparation in reading instruction.

State	Programs in Sample	Average Count of Components Addressed in Programs	Average Number of Contrary Practices in Programs
National	693	2.6	1.6
Colorado	15	4.6	0.4
Louisiana	15	4.5	1.1
Arkansas	13	4.3	1.2
Mississippi	10	3.9	0.8

States making a difference - like **Mississippi and Colorado** - have developed robust teacher preparation standards and accountability, require a strong licensure test, and offer supports to prep programs making the transition.

Programs provide little preparation in teaching reading to English learners, struggling readers, and speakers of English language varieties.

English language learners

71% of programs **do not dedicate** at least two instructional hours

88% of programs **do not require** any practice opportunities

Struggling readers

(including students with dyslexia)

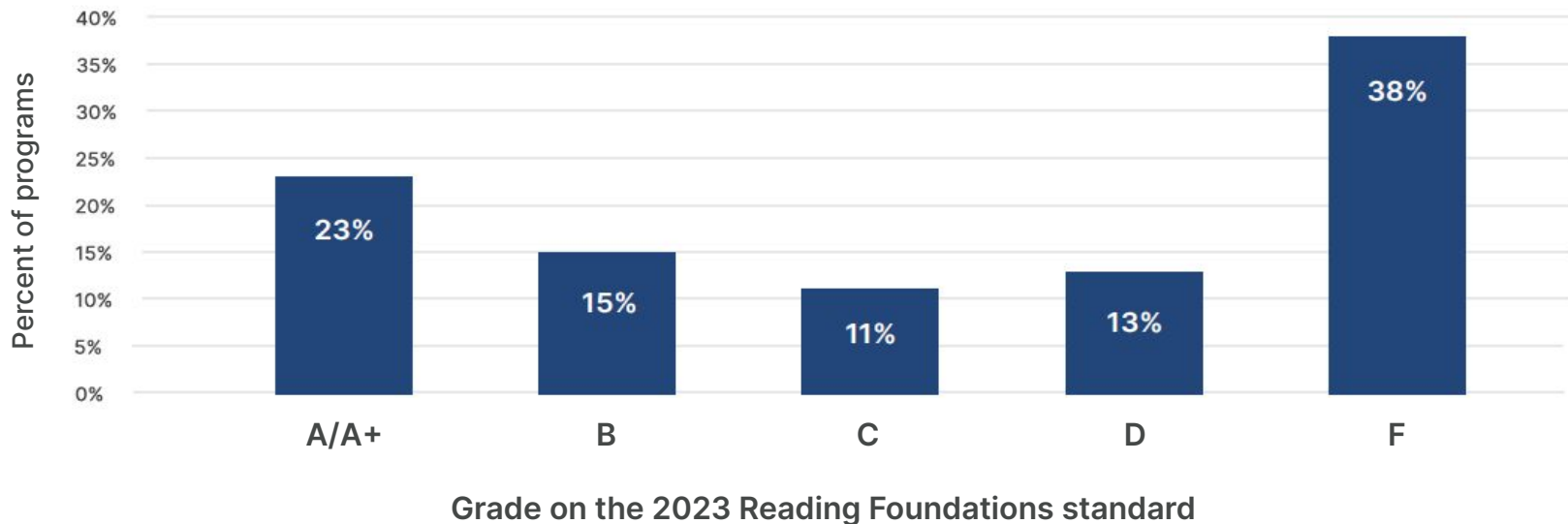
58% of programs **do not dedicate** at least two instructional hours

81% of programs **do not require** any practice opportunities

Speakers of English language varieties

91% of programs **do not** currently address this student population **at all**

While 160 programs earn an A, far too many fail to ensure aspiring elementary teachers are prepared to effectively teach reading.



Programs' grades are based on how many components they adequately address, and they can lose a letter grade for teaching numerous contrary practices.

Recommendations

Summary of Key Actions for Stakeholders

Teacher preparation programs

Use detailed feedback from NCTQ to revise courses.

Ensure practice opportunities give candidates an opportunity to apply components.

Eliminate instruction of content contrary to research-based practices.

State policymakers

Set specific, explicit, and comprehensive standards for teacher preparation programs, and hold programs accountable for them.

Require a high-quality reading licensure test.

School districts

Be strategic in recruiting new teachers— focus efforts on programs adequately teaching reading.

Prioritize partnerships for field experiences with high-quality programs.

Parents, teachers, and advocates

Use your voice!

Advocate for adoption of high-quality, science-based curricula.

Advocate for local schools to focus hiring on teachers well-prepared to teach reading.