TEACHER PREP REVIEW

Strengthening Elementary Reading Instruction
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:
- 56% Black students score BELOW BASIC
- 50% Hispanic students score BELOW BASIC
- 67% English language learners score BELOW BASIC
- 70% 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

**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

National Council on Teacher Quality (June 2023)  Teacher Prep Review: Strengthening Elementary Reading Instruction
In addition, NCTQ analyzes the extent to which programs prepare candidates to teach a range of students with diverse needs in learning to read.
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. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Programs in Sample</th>
<th>Average Count of Components Addressed in Programs</th>
<th>Average Number of Contrary Practices in Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>693</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colorado</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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National Council on Teacher Quality (June 2023)  
Teacher Prep Review: Strengthening Elementary Reading Instruction
Programs provide little preparation in teaching reading to English learners, struggling readers, and speakers of English language varieties.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Instructional Hours</th>
<th>Practice Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English language learners</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>do not dedicate</td>
<td>do not require</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Struggling readers (including students with dyslexia)</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>do not dedicate</td>
<td>do not require</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speakers of English language varieties</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>do not currently address</td>
<td>do not require</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

National Council on Teacher Quality (June 2023)
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.
### Summary of Key Actions for Stakeholders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Teacher preparation programs</strong></th>
<th><strong>State policymakers</strong></th>
<th><strong>School districts</strong></th>
<th><strong>Parents, teachers, and advocates</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use detailed feedback from NCTQ to revise courses.</td>
<td>Set specific, explicit, and comprehensive standards for teacher preparation programs, and hold programs accountable for them.</td>
<td>Be strategic in recruiting new teachers—focus efforts on programs adequately teaching reading.</td>
<td>Use your voice!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure practice opportunities give candidates an opportunity to apply components.</td>
<td>Require a high-quality reading licensure test.</td>
<td>Prioritize partnerships for field experiences with high-quality programs.</td>
<td>Advocate for adoption of high-quality, science-based curricula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate instruction of content contrary to research-based practices.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Advocate for local schools to focus hiring on teachers well-prepared to teach reading.</td>
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