

Early Reading: Standard 2

To learn more about how programs are scored on this standard, including how individual indicators are satisfied, please see its [scoring methodology](#).

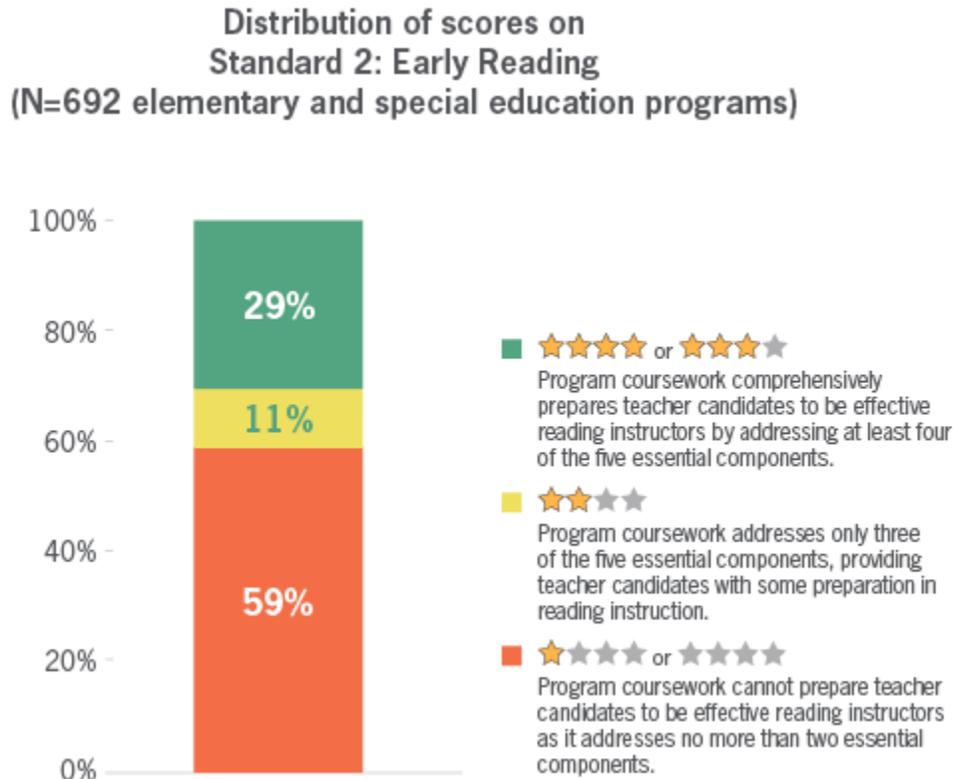
For information on resources for this standard, please see the [resources section](#).

Background

Teaching children how to read is "job one" for elementary and special education teachers because reading proficiency underpins all later learning. Unfortunately, some 30 percent of all children do not become capable readers. Using the knowledge gained from decades of research and articulated in the Common Core State Standards, effective reading instruction could cut this unacceptable rate of failure by two-thirds or even more.

Lectures, assignments and textbooks of required reading courses are examined to determine whether the training that teachers receive is in line with the findings of the National Reading Panel, the most authoritative source on how children learn to read. Programs meeting the Strong Design (🏆) indicator are exemplary in every aspect of training in reading instruction we examined.

Overview



Sample for this standard: The sample encompasses all undergraduate and graduate elementary programs for which data obtained were clear enough to evaluate.

What are common reasons that programs earn no stars or few stars on the Early Reading Standard?

- *Coursework does not adequately address two or more essential components of effective reading instruction.* Preparing teacher candidates to teach reading by covering some but not all components is like asking candidates to sit on a two-legged stool. Phonemic awareness and fluency are the components most often neglected in instruction.
- *Coursework does not require high-caliber comprehensive reading textbooks to support instruction.* With a number of strong textbooks readily available, instructors should require texts that adequately and comprehensively cover all five essential components of reading instruction.
- *One or more literacy courses require a textbook that addresses the components of effective reading instruction, but they are not complemented by lectures and practice.* Lectures and practice must complement a strong textbook to fully support candidates as they learn how to be effective reading instructors.

Institutions of Distinction

Four institutions of higher education (IHEs) earn the distinction of having both the undergraduate and graduate elementary programs in our sample earn four stars because they require one or more courses in which the combination of texts, lectures and practice adequately address the five essential early reading components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. These institutions are **California State University -- Bakersfield, California State University - Dominguez Hills, Florida State University, and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.**

Another eight IHEs in our sample have both an elementary and a special education program that earn four stars: the **University of Central Florida, Anderson University (IN), the University of Maryland - College Park, Delta State University (MS), Mississippi University for Women, William Carey University (MS), Elon University (NC) and the University of New Mexico.**

Thirty-eight states have at least one elementary program in our sample at either the undergraduate or graduate level that earns four stars.

Strong Design

Only five programs earn Strong Design designations on this standard, and all are undergraduate elementary programs. These programs deserve special recognition for their comprehensive and efficient instruction in the five essential components, with all required courses and textbooks supporting that effort:

- **College of Charleston (SC)**
- **Colorado State University - Pueblo**
- **Rockford College (IL)**
- **Southern Methodist University (TX)**
- **University of Minnesota - Morris**

✓+ **Colorado State University - Pueblo** earns the highest possible score in its coverage of each of the five essential components of effective reading instruction. The program requires only a single course in literacy, but it is an exceptionally strong course, requiring not just one but two "acceptable core" textbooks. For each component at least two lectures are provided and at least one type of practice (assessments, writing assignments or practice teaching) is required.

✓+ **University of Minnesota - Morris** earns a Strong Design designation in early reading and also earns four stars on the two other reading-related standards, the English Language Learners Standard and the Struggling Readers Standard.

Findings

Seventeen percent of elementary and special education programs earn a score of four stars on this standard. Four percent of programs earn four stars on all three reading-related standards in the *Review*: early reading, struggling readers and English language learners.

✓+ **California State University - Dominguez Hills** earns four stars in the three reading-related standards (early reading, struggling readers and English language learners) in both its undergraduate and graduate elementary programs.

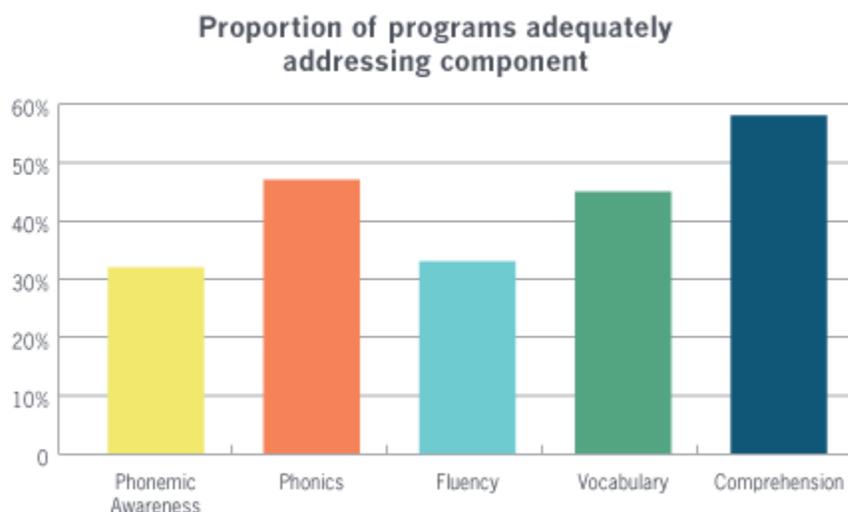
Programs that earn four stars on the three *Review* reading standards

Undergraduate elementary	Graduate elementary
<p> California State University - Dominguez Hills Chaminade University of Honolulu (HI) Dallas Baptist University (TX) Delta State University (MS) Elon University (NC) Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University Florida State University Fort Lewis College (CO) Langston University (OK) Miami University - Oxford (OH) North Central College (IL) Stephen F. Austin State University (TX) SUNY - Fredonia (NY) Texas A&M International University Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi University of Colorado Colorado Springs University of Delaware University of Louisiana at Lafayette University of Minnesota - Morris University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma University of Texas at Austin William Carey University (MS) </p>	<p> California State University - Dominguez Hills California State University - East Bay Christopher Newport University (VA) Loyola Marymount University (CA) University of Maryland - College Park </p>

At the other end of the spectrum, 41 percent of programs in our sample earn no stars on this standard, which means that required literacy coursework adequately addresses at most one of the five essential components of reading instruction.

Component-level results

Digging a bit deeper, we find that the programs in our sample do not address the five components evenly in instruction.



While comprehension is covered in 58 percent of the programs, vocabulary and phonics are each addressed in fewer than half of the programs, and phonemic awareness and fluency are addressed adequately in only 33 percent of the programs.

Textbooks

Unlike in the field of elementary math preparation, where a relatively small number of textbooks are used, there appears to be no end of possible elementary reading texts. We added evaluations of 453 texts during the *Review* for a total of 866 current editions in our database for which we have done evaluations. The majority (65 percent) of these textbooks are inadequate or irrelevant for early reading instruction. There can be no mincing words here: Both the number of different textbooks used and the fact that most do not convey scientifically based reading instruction represent a scandal for teacher education, one which should be addressed immediately.

Below are the 10 textbooks most commonly used in courses evaluated in the *Review* that comprehensively and rigorously cover the scientific basis and instructional elements of the five essential components of effective reading instruction. Names of additional acceptable textbooks can be found in the [full list](#) of all evaluated texts.

Texts covering all five elements of effective reading instruction

Title	Author	Edition	Number of courses in which the book is used in programs covered in the Review
Creating Literacy Instruction for All Students	Gunning, Thomas G.	8	57
Teaching Children to Read: The Teacher Makes the Difference	Reutzel, D. Ray & Cooter, Robert B.	6	37
Literacy: Helping Students Construct Meaning	Cooper, J. David; Kiger, Nancy D.; Robinson, Michael D.; & Slansky, Jill A.	8	19
Teaching Reading Sourcebook	Honig, Bill; Diamond, Linda; & Gutlohn, Linda.	2	18
Strategies for Reading Assessment and Instruction: Helping Every Child Succeed	Reutzel, D. Ray & Cooter, Robert B.	4	12
Teaching Reading in the 21st Century	Graves, Michael F; Juel, Connie F; Graves, Bonnie B; & Dewitz, Peter F.	5	11
Locating and Correcting Reading Difficulties	Cockrum, Ward A. & Shanker, James L.	10	9
Literacy in Grades 4-8: Best Practices for a Comprehensive Program	Cecil, Nancy Lee & Gipe, Joan P.	2	7

Title	Author	Edition	Number of courses in which the book is used in programs covered in the <i>Review</i>
Teaching Reading to Students Who Are At-Risk or Have Disabilities: A Multi-Tier Approach	Bursuck, William D. & Damer, Mary	2	7
Teaching Students with Learning Problems	Mercer, Cecil; Mercer, Ann; & Pallen, Paige	8	7