



How NCTQ scores the Struggling Readers Standard

[Standard and indicators](#)

Data used to score this standard

Evaluation of elementary programs on Standard 4: Struggling Readers 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 the Struggling Readers Standard¹ are based on examination of syllabi and required textbooks in coursework that is deemed relevant because it addresses literacy instruction in whole or in part. (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.

All required textbooks are also reviewed by [reading experts](#) to evaluate their treatment of strategies for struggling readers. Ratings of reviewed reading textbooks are provided [here](#).²

Analysts score syllabi based on coverage in lectures and elements of accountability (assessments, writing assignments or actual teaching practice) of strategies stated as being related to struggling readers, who may be identified as such, or identified as, for example, “special education students,” “dyslexic students,” “students at risk” or “non-proficient readers.” The analysis does not evaluate the utility of the strategies, only that they are cited as topics for instruction and practice.

The scores in each of these areas are proportional to the coverage. For example, the course receives minimal credit for lecture coverage if such strategies are a part of a single lecture and full lecture credit if they are the focus of two lectures.

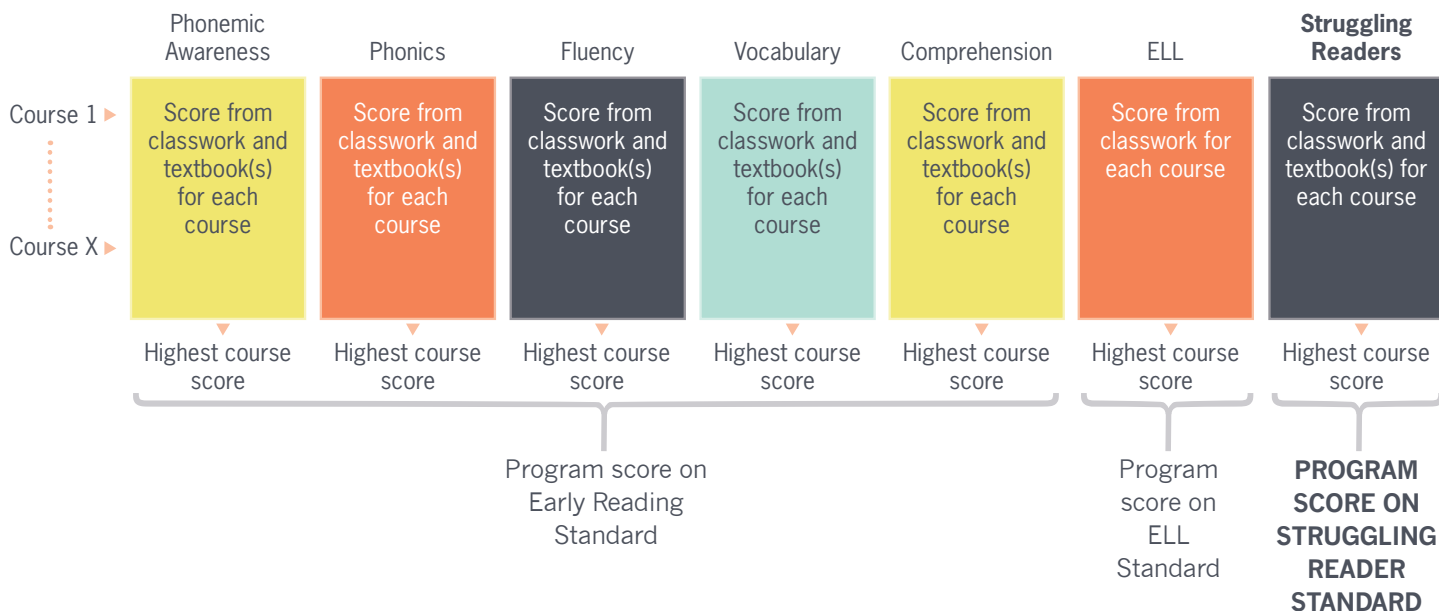
¹ We define such students as students who are falling behind and having academic difficulties in the area of reading, or students at risk of reading failure if they do not receive appropriate and effective intervention. Students with learning disabilities are included.

² 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 the **Early Reading Standard's** Indicator 2.2) that textbooks can and should best support effective reading instruction.

In accordance with Indicator 4.1, scores from syllabus and textbook reviews are combined into a *course* score.

The *overall* program score is the highest course score in any course.

Evaluating reading coursework for the Early Reading, English Language Learners and STRUGGLING READERS STANDARDS



Common misconceptions about how analysts evaluate the Struggling Readers Standard:

- *Any required reading or literacy 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 essential components of effective reading instruction and struggling readers – for example, courses that focus exclusively on the language arts – 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.
- *References to strategies designed for “diverse populations,” “exceptional needs students,” “students from poverty,” “culturally diverse or English language learner students,” “students with multiple intelligences,” “differentiated instruction” or “students with different learning styles” are not necessarily relevant to this standard.* The focus of this standard is not the broad spectrum of strategies that may be used with these groups of students; rather, it is specifically focused on strategies relating to reading instruction for struggling readers. Thus, strategies relating to these groups are not credited when they stand alone without additional references to strategies relevant to struggling readers.

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

Delivery of relevant instructional strategies (Indicator 4.1)

✓ - fully satisfies the indicator	✗ - does not satisfy the indicator
<p>The program has coursework in which both lectures and practice adequately address strategies for teaching struggling readers.:</p> <p>Example:</p> <p>Lectures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>Important Principles for Instruction for Delayed Readers</i>■ <i>The Severely Delayed Reader and the Nonreader</i> <p>Practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ <i>During the semester, you will work closely with an excellent literacy teacher/ specialist who has children (possibly at different grade levels) identified for Tier 2/3 instruction. Each of you will select, a small group of “case study” students. ... You will make a total of 13 visits to this classroom over the course of the semester. Specific assignments will focus on one-on-one assessments and small group/clinical work with your case study students.</i>	<p>The program has no coursework in which both lectures and practice adequately address strategies for teaching struggling readers.</p>