

Iowa Literacy Educator Preparation Workbook

2024



Department of Education

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Introduction

Context

The Department’s mission is to ensure all students experience a world-class education. A component within this mission is the goal to “Equip Iowa’s future workforce with a strong foundation in literacy by increasing the percentage of students who proficiently read and comprehend grade level material.”

The Iowa Literacy Educator Curriculum Workbook (Workbook) evolved from the requirements for educators detailed in Iowa Administrative Rules. The competencies to effectively teach literacy were derived from the following resources: [Iowa Academic Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects](#), Iowa Department of Education’s (Department) [Science of Reading Definition](#), [International Dyslexia Association Standards](#) and content from the [Foundations of Reading](#) test required by [House File 2618](#).

The Workbook, created in response to [House File 2545](#) for the statewide literacy plan, provides suggestions on content that educator preparation programs could include in their curriculum to align literacy educator preparation with the Science of Reading.

The [Iowa definition of the Science of Reading](#) explicitly states that it is evolving and dependent on continued scientifically-based research. As such, educator preparation programs must have a clear mechanism in place to stay current with emerging research, integrating new findings and ensuring the most up-to-date practices. Programs are encouraged to stay current with developments, adapting programs accordingly and can communicate with the Department if they find concerns in this document.

Alignment and Collaboration

A [crosswalk document](#) demonstrates the alignment of the Workbook with Iowa’s educator preparation rules (Chapters 281-79 and 282-13), the Iowa Comprehensive State Literacy Plan (link coming soon), the Foundations of Reading test and the International Dyslexia Association’s Knowledge and Practice Standards. This Workbook was reviewed by literacy experts across the state and feedback was integrated from: educator preparation program literacy faculty members, members of the Iowa Dyslexia Board, the Iowa Reading Research Center, the Statewide Literacy Leadership Team (SLLT), members of the Iowa Association of Colleges for Teacher Education Literacy Leadership Group, the K-12 Department Literacy Consultants, and Sterling Literacy Consulting.

Purpose

Teaching reading effectively demands extensive knowledge and skill. Iowa is dedicated to equipping educators with the necessary tools and strategies to enhance student literacy outcomes and develop effective teaching practices. This involves high standards for teachers and supporting programs to prepare future educators with best practices. This Workbook serves as a resource for the preparation and ongoing professional development of pre-service literacy educators.

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- K-12 Department Literacy Consultants
- Iowa State Comprehensive Literacy Plan Taskforce
- Literacy Faculty across Iowa Institutions of Higher Education
- Iowa Reading Research Center
- Statewide Literacy Leadership Team
- Iowa Dyslexia Board
- Sterling Literacy Consulting

Part 1: Iowa Literacy Educator Competencies

1. Foundations of Literacy Development

An elementary educator with a deep and comprehensive understanding of literacy development can provide evidence of their ability to enhance literacy development in an integrative approach to *reading, writing, speaking, viewing and listening*. A knowledgeable educator demonstrates their understanding in the following competencies:

- 1.1 Reasonable goals and expectations for learners at various stages of *literacy development*, including familiarity with the Iowa Academic Standards for Literacy progression, *concepts of print*, and the *alphabetic principle*.
- 1.2 How the *brain learns to read* (typical and atypical reading development), including the impact of neurobiological learning differences, such as dyslexia.
- 1.3 *Theoretical frameworks and models* including the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough’s Rope, the Four-Part Processor, Ehri’s phases and the alphabetic principle. Identification of evidence-based curriculum and high-quality instructional materials; curriculum that is not evidence-based instruction (e.g., three cueing); and the history of reading instruction that has led to policy and curricular changes.
- 1.4 *Language processing* requirements of proficient reading and writing including:
 - Phonological (speech sounds),
 - Orthographic (print/graphemes that represent sounds),
 - Syntax (sentence structure/parts of speech),
 - Semantic (meaning),
 - Understanding (background knowledge) and
 - Morphology ([POSSUM](#) Iowa Reading Research Center [IRRC], 2023; Wolf & Gottwald, 2016).

2. Knowledge of Diverse Reading Profiles – “The Who”

“Literacy success for all is the defining human right of the 21st century, regardless of zip code, ethnic origin, dialect or language” ([The Reading League](#) [TRL], 2022). Elementary educators are equipped with dispositions that support just treatment of all students (Young, 2023), including:

- 2.1 Understanding how selecting diverse *children’s literature* is crucial for fostering inclusive and equitable education, supporting students’ linguistic diversity and overall development. Educators understand the importance of reading a broad selection of texts and genres.
- 2.2 Supporting students from *diverse ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds*, including English learners.
- 2.3 Exposure to literature in cross-curricular, interdisciplinary, content-area settings that provides content knowledge, interrelatedness of skills and builds the language comprehension side of Scarborough’s rope.
- 2.4 Knowing how to *adapt instruction* for students with weakness in working memory, attention, executive function and critical thinking skills.
- 2.5 Identify and meet the needs of students who are struggling with literacy, [including those with dyslexia](#), which is caused by *neurobiological brain differences* to support all students becoming successful in their cognitive, [emotional and social](#) development.

- 2.6 Understanding appropriate uses of assistive technology and technology for learner growth and development.

3. Structured Literacy Instruction – “The How”

An elementary educator skilled in literacy instruction is able to:

- 3.1 Deliver [explicit and systematic](#) instruction modeled step-by-step with guided practice, planned scaffolding and immediate positive and corrective feedback. Implement sequential instruction to ensure content and skills are taught in a structured order, with cumulative review that leads to mastery.
- 3.2 Apply multimodal, receptive and expressive approaches to teach encoding and decoding through reading, spelling, writing and oral language instruction. This includes integration of instructional technology for designing and delivering effective instruction and appropriate interventions.
- 3.3 Deliver *diagnostic and responsive teaching* that continuously assesses student progress and considers variables impacting cognitive load to adjust teaching.
- 3.4 Integrate word reading instruction that emphasizes code by including explicit phonics-based instruction. Strategies unsupported by research are not utilized for teaching how to read (i.e., three cueing and sight word memorization).
- 3.5 Implement effective classroom management and grouping configurations as it applies to literacy instruction ([IRRC, 2024](#)).

4. Structured Literacy Instruction – “The What”

4.1 Phonemic Awareness

An elementary educator is skilled in and demonstrates the ability to teach the following phonemic awareness concepts:

- 4.1a Instruct phoneme awareness via brief, articulatory and multimodal approaches including stating the goal of all phonological or phonemic activities.
- 4.1b Emphasize *individual phonemes* vs larger phonological units of speech (e.g., rhyme, syllables, onsets and rimes) and the importance of orthographic mapping which can be developed through processes such as [phoneme/grapheme mapping](#).

4.2 Phonics and Orthography for Decoding and Encoding

Phonics supports broader reading and spelling skills. Teachers should be competent in helping students *apply phonics knowledge to all areas of reading and writing* by:

- 4.2a Using specific terminology for phonics across programs aligned with the Science of Reading to teach literacy with a strong knowledge of English code (e.g., inflectional morpheme, digraph, diphthong, schwa, r- or l- controlled vowels, syllable types).
- 4.2b Demonstrating ability to *pronounce*, classify and compare *all variations of consonant and vowel letter phonemes* given the grapheme.
- 4.2c Understanding *letter sound correspondence* and various approaches to the alphabetic principle, including print to speech and speech to print. Candidates know there are approximately 44 sounds in English and can *specifically articulate* how the individual sounds are represented by approximately 175 *spelling patterns*.
- 4.2d Detailed application of *spelling rules*.

- 4.2e Decoding and encoding strategies for teaching high-frequency words, *multisyllabic words* and *irregular words*. Including strategies for decoding words with inflectional morphemes, common consonant-vowel combinations (e.g., CVC, CVCC, CVVC), and word patterns (e.g., onset/rimes or word families).
- 4.2f Using phonics skills to teach readers to flexibly apply alternate pronunciations when decoding via *set for variability* approaches.

4.3 Fluency/Word Recognition

Elementary educators can provide evidence of their knowledge of fluency including:

- 4.3a The development of fluency including the interaction between decoding, fluency and comprehension. This includes fluency as a link between decoding and comprehension and prosody as a link between fluency and comprehension.
- 4.3b Evidence-based explicit strategies for accuracy, rate and prosody (e.g., phrase-cued reading, echo reading).
- 4.3c The role of various types of text, including decodable and connected text, to build reading accuracy, automaticity and comprehension.

4.4 Vocabulary

Elementary educators are knowledgeable about vocabulary including:

- 4.4a Recognizes the role of *vocabulary development* and knowledge in oral and written language comprehension. This includes the integration of reading, writing, speaking and listening for vocabulary instruction.
- 4.4b A variety of *instructional strategies* to teach across the *tiers of vocabulary*. *Direct instruction and indirect methods* are utilized in word learning and word consciousness (e.g., morphology and etymology via [IRRC - POSSUM](#)).

4.5 Listening and Reading Comprehension

Elementary educators can provide evidence about developing text comprehension including:

- 4.5a Use of Iowa Academic Standards related to key ideas and details, craft and structure, integration of knowledge and ideas. This includes teaching strategies that integrate literacy instruction into content areas and those that promote reflective reading before, during and after reading.
- 4.5b Routines to foster comprehension for each major genre: informative/explanatory, narrative and opinion/arguments; including various levels of comprehension: literal, inferential and evaluative.
- 4.5c Instructional strategies for word, sentence and passage level comprehension, including critical thinking and analysis skills.
- 4.5d Factors to enhance deep comprehension such as background knowledge, vocabulary, literary structures/conventions, knowledge of common sayings or idioms, close reading strategies and verbal reasoning.

4.6 Written Expression

Elementary educators understand skill domains that apply to [written expression](#) and writing in response to reading including:

4.6a Typing and Handwriting

- Research-based principles for teaching typing and letter formation of manuscript and cursive handwriting, including pencil grip.

4.6b Spelling

- Recognize the relationships among spelling, decoding, phonemic awareness, word recognition and morphemic knowledge. Understand that conducting error analysis in spelling assessments helps educators determine decoding and encoding strengths and need areas.
- Assessments to identify level of [spelling](#)/orthographic development in order to guide word study instruction.
- The influences of phonological, orthographic and morphemic knowledge on spelling in order to devise instruction related to the alphabetic principle, spelling patterns, morphological systems and word origin.

4.6c Writing Process

- Production and distribution of writing, including researching, to compose text of varying lengths (e.g., sentence, paragraph, essay) that follow commonly accepted rules of syntax and usage alongside supporting mechanics and conventions, composition, revision and editing.
- Understanding appropriate uses of assistive technology and technology as a means to express ideas and execute all components of the writing process.

5. Assessment

Elementary educators are knowledgeable about how assessments guide instruction and know how to administer and interpret assessments, including:

- 5.1 Assessment practices in a range of literacy skills including - phonemic awareness, decoding, oral reading proficiency, spelling, comprehension and writing.
- 5.2 The differences in purpose among screening, progress-monitoring, diagnostic, [formative](#) and summative, including understanding basic principles of test construction.
- 5.3 Using diagnostic-prescriptive assessment practices within a [multi-tiered system of support framework](#). This includes using screening tests to determine when and how to provide diagnostic testing to design instruction.
- 5.4 Communicate assessment data to students, parents and colleagues regarding students who may be at risk of not succeeding in school because of the presence of learning challenges such as ADHD, auditory or visual processing, multilingual learners or dyslexia (see [Talking about Dyslexia in Schools](#)).

Part 2: Process for Evaluation

1. Evaluation Criteria: Key Performance Categories

Preservice and practicing teachers must understand that reading is not an innate ability, but a complex skill involving multiple brain areas, which requires intentional instruction. Given the impact of reading on personal success and societal participation, it is imperative that Iowa Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) rigorously develop and assess their coursework to ensure it aligns with effective, evidence-based reading instruction. To achieve this, Iowa's EPPs can undergo a process to evaluate the alignment of their courses with essential instructional principles.

In assigning a rating of *meets*, *developing* or *does not meet*, each competency will show evidence of meeting benchmark criteria related to three key performance categories.

- a. Materials/Curriculum
- b. Assessments to Demonstrate Content Knowledge
- c. Practical Application

(a) Materials/Curriculum

The materials (textbooks, readings, podcasts, slide presentations and other materials) must align with evidence-based reading instruction (e.g., the Science of Reading).

To meet benchmark, EPPs will:

- Use resources aligned with the Science of Reading. (Programs should rationalize the use of materials that are not part of widely accepted resources, such as those included in lists provided by [The Center for Reading Science](#) in the [Textbook Spreadsheet](#) or by NCTQ in [Textbook Recommendations](#).)

Benchmark	Does Not Meet (0)	Developing (1)	Meets (2)
(a) Materials/Curriculum	Textbooks and supporting readings/videos do not meet expectations.	Textbook and supporting readings/videos rationale is unclear or one text is not aligned.	Textbooks and supporting readings/videos provide clear alignment with accepted resources.

(b) Assessments to Demonstrate Content Knowledge

EPPs design learning opportunities with clear outcomes aligned with fair, reliable, valid and rigorous assessments administered throughout the program:

To meet benchmark, EPPs will:

- Provide clear evidence that candidates have mastered the Iowa Literacy Educator Competencies via multiple measures, not including candidate self-reflection and classroom discussion.

Benchmark	Does Not Meet (0)	Developing (1)	Meets (2)
(b) Assessments to Demonstrate Content Knowledge	No graded written work, tests, quizzes. Programs may expose candidates to the criteria, but evidence is limited of candidate performance	Assessment rigor is unclear, it is difficult to determine if content knowledge of each candidate is measurable through the practices included in the course.	Includes quality, rigorous evaluations of learning throughout the course and well-planned end-of-course assessments. Candidates are given clear opportunities to demonstrate content knowledge and practices are in place for reviewing material that is not understood.

(c) Practical Application

Candidates demonstrate they can implement literacy competencies and reflect on learning in a practicum.

To meet benchmark, EPPs will:

- Explicitly connect clinical elements to the Iowa Literacy Educator Competencies.
- Design opportunities for candidates to implement evidence-based instructional programs prior to student teaching.

Benchmark	Does Not Meet (0)	Developing (1)	Meets (2)
(c) Practical Application	Clinical opportunities are not clear or may be observation based.	One clinical opportunity is embedded that is generally tied to competencies.	More than one clinical opportunity is reflectively and explicitly tied to the five overarching competencies. Clinical experience is embedded in the program prior to student teaching.

Part 3: Stages of Evaluation

Stages of Evaluation

By December 2025, the Department will start a comprehensive review of literacy curriculum and the aggregate data regarding programs' Foundations of Reading test passage rates. Programs must show alignment with the revised Chapter 79 standards, Chapter 13 standards and statewide literacy plan. In preparation, the Department is providing the Program Self Analysis Tool in Appendix 1 for programs to engage in a self-study process and the opportunity to participate with a peer review exercise. Programs may engage in three phases to demonstrate benchmark proficiency as related to each of the Iowa Literacy Educator Competencies.

2.1 Phase 1 - Program Self Analysis

In phase one, programs use the [Program Self Analysis Tool \(Appendix 1\)](#) to collect evidence showcasing how the program meets each competency. As described above in Part 2: Process for Evaluation, this includes demonstrating:

- a) what **materials and curriculum** the program is using;
- b) the **assessments** that provide evidence that each candidate has obtained the content knowledge; and
- c) how candidates engage in **practicum** experiences to align with the Iowa Literacy Educator Competencies.

2.2 Phase 2 - Blind Peer Review and Feedback for Program Improvement

To provide a deeper evaluation to support programs in curricular revision, the Department will facilitate the engagement of literacy faculty across Iowa EPPs to complete a blind peer review for Iowa programs.

Programs who wish to participate will provide the Department with the *Appendix 1 Program Self Analysis Tool*, including artifacts (such as syllabi and sample work). Programs will need to remove all identifying information prior to sending to the department. Ideally, each institution will have three blind reviewers to provide feedback for continuous improvement.

Reviewers will be trained in the process of syllabi evaluation with inter-rater reliability exercises. Peer reviewers will independently review programs using the included rubrics to evaluate each competency in the aforementioned benchmarks. Scores and suggestions will be compiled by a Department consultant and sent to each program for revision opportunities.

The Department will use the review data to inform professional development opportunities and to support continued curricular revision.

2.3 Phase 3 - Iowa Department of Education Review

To be determined.

Passage rates: Foundations of Reading test

On May 7, 2024 the Governor signed [House File 2618](#), an act relating to elementary literacy by modifying teacher preparation program requirements to require the administration of the Foundations of Reading test. Programs are required to report to the Department the percentage of students whose scores on the assessment administered were above, at and below the passing score.

In the future, the passage rate on this assessment will be used by the Department as one measure showing if institutions are delivering a Literacy Educator preparation program aligned with evidence-based reading instruction and the opportunities and resources provided to their candidates to retake the test.

Appendix 1: Program Self Analysis/Phase 1

Programs may use the linked [Program Self Analysis Tool](#) to show curricular alignment to the Literacy Teacher Educator Competencies with reliance on the performance indicators in Part 2 of the Workbook.

Appendix 2: Curriculum Map

Programs may utilize this [curricular mapping](#) tool to demonstrate how content is introduced, taught and assessed across coursework. Mount St. Joseph provides a [Course Alignment Planning Tool](#) with valuable directions for content coverage and assessment. A collaborative curriculum revision process, informed by the Iowa Literacy Educator competencies, can serve as a valuable part of reflective self-assessment, helping programs effectively demonstrate alignment and develop performance-based curricula.

Appendix 3: Additional Resources

Once the program has done a self evaluation, the resources below may be helpful to the improvement of the curriculum and syllabi.

- [Framework related to content on Foundations of Reading assessment](#)
- [The Center for Reading Science Course Enhancement Tools](#) including the [Textbook Spreadsheet](#)
- [CEEDAR Syllabus Revision tool, The Reading League, Rhode Island](#)
- [Science of Reading Defining Guide](#)
- [Reading Rockets Reading 101 Learning Modules](#)
- [Pearson Annotated Bibliography](#)
- [Textbook recommendations \(NCTQ\)](#)
- [CUNY Reading Corps](#)
- [RISE Reading Workshop](#)

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