
FRAMEWORK FOR INTEGRATING THE SCIENCE OF READING IN EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Science of Reading (SoR) is a comprehensive, interdisciplinary body of research from the fields of education, cognitive psychology, linguistics, neuroscience, sociology, speech and language pathology, implementation science, and other fields that aims to understand how students develop reading and writing skills and competencies. SoR is not a single approach or entity. Rather, it is a large, diverse body of evidence that is used to inform curriculum decisions and instructional strategies. By integrating research across multiple disciplines, we gain a comprehensive understanding of reading and writing processes, leading to a diverse collection of evidence-based practices.

Literacy skills develop from early childhood through adolescence. SoR provides effective methodologies to teach and nurture these skills across all educational levels and for all populations, including students with diverse learning needs and strengths, such as students identified with disabilities and multilingual learners (MLLs). SoR promotes student-centered, culturally responsive, and inclusive learning environments that emphasize rigorous learning and high expectations, inspiring students to develop lifelong reading and writing skills.

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) and Board of Regents are committed to ensuring that all students have access to high-quality instruction and to fostering a culture of reading and writing excellence across the state. Literacy is the cornerstone of academic success. As such, NYSED endeavors to ensure that teachers are equipped with the pedagogical content knowledge and skills to provide effective instruction to all students that is grounded in research, culturally responsive, and aligned with evidence-based practices.

This framework is designed to support educator preparation programs (EPPs) in integrating SoR into their literacy coursework and clinical experiences. While the guidance is primarily aimed at five program areas that have an emphasis on literacy instruction – Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 2), Childhood Education (Grades 1-6), Literacy, Students with Disabilities, and English to Speakers of Other Languages – its principles are relevant across all program areas. Strong literacy instruction is foundational to student success in every grade and subject, including adolescence and content-area teaching. As such, EPPs preparing teacher candidates (“candidates”) in other areas may also find this framework useful in strengthening literacy-based practice within their programs.

Framework Overview

This framework is structured to provide EPPs with a systematic approach to reviewing and enhancing their literacy coursework and clinical experiences (fieldwork, student teaching, practica, and/or residencies), reflecting NYSED’s commitment to ensuring all students can read and write to meet the demands of the 21st century and beyond. The primary goal is to design coursework and clinical experiences that prepare candidates to support all students’ acquisition of literacy skills by developing essential competencies in effective reading and writing instruction practices that are grounded in current research, evidence, and culturally responsive practices, and aligned with NYSED’s SoR literacy instruction standards, guidance, and resources.

This framework is organized into three distinct components:

1. **Pedagogical Content Knowledge and Actionable Skills:** Ensures that candidates develop a comprehensive understanding of literacy concepts, practices, and developmental progressions grounded in SoR and the Big 6 skills and competencies—oral language, phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Candidates also learn to assess and address gaps in foundational literacy skills through explicit, systematic, and data-driven instruction that supports diverse learners. EPPs have the flexibility to determine how each candidate will acquire the pedagogical content knowledge and actionable skills to indicate a comprehensive understanding of SoR.

Throughout this framework, (k) indicates knowledge—the concepts and principles candidates must understand—while (s) indicates skills—the actionable practices candidates are expected to engage in and demonstrate competency with. This distinction clarifies how programs address both theoretical understanding and practical application.

2. **Instructional Planning:** Equips candidates with the ability to design explicit, systematic, and scaffolded literacy lessons that integrate formative assessments, differentiated instruction (tailored teaching methods and content that meet the diverse learning needs and strengths of all students), and culturally responsive teaching strategies. Candidates learn to create cohesive instructional units that build on prior knowledge and align with literacy goals and state learning standards.
3. **Teaching Practice:** Focuses on delivering effective instruction through cycles of modeling, observation, practice, feedback, and refinement. Candidates rehearse and demonstrate instructional delivery methods, with opportunity for reflection, that emphasize direct instruction, guided practice, and independent application of skills, ensuring purposeful feedback and continuous improvement.

Within each component, key knowledge and skills have been identified for candidates. This framework is designed to prepare candidates in the key SoR principles. Additionally, this framework includes

suggestions for strategically integrating SoR into existing programs ([Section III: Program Integration Guidelines](#)).

What Does “Evidence-Based” Mean in this Framework¹?

In this framework, "evidence-based" means an activity, strategy, or intervention that demonstrates a statistically significant effect on improving student outcomes or other relevant outcomes based on:

- **Strong evidence** (e.g., experimental studies),
- **Moderate evidence** (e.g., quasi-experimental studies),
- **Promising evidence** (e.g., correlational studies), or
- **A rationale based on high-quality research findings or positive evaluation** that such activity, strategy, or intervention is likely to improve student outcomes or other relevant outcomes and includes ongoing efforts to examine the effects of such activity, strategy, or intervention.

Appropriate sources of evidence in determining whether an approach is evidence-based could include:

- **Peer-reviewed studies** published in reputable education, psychology, and cognitive science journals.
- **Findings from meta-analyses** or systematic reviews demonstrating consistent, positive effects on literacy outcomes.
- **Practices endorsed by recognized research organizations** (e.g., What Works Clearinghouse, Institute of Education Sciences [IES], National Reading Panel, International Dyslexia Association [IDA]).
- **Instructional approaches validated through controlled research studies** with replicable results.
- **Empirical studies using rigorous methodologies**, including randomized controlled trials (RCTs), quasi-experimental designs, and longitudinal studies.

¹ See Section 100.3 (c)(3)(vii) of the [Commissioner’s Regulations](#)

II. FRAMEWORK COMPONENTS

1. PEDAGOGICAL CONTENT

Objective: To ensure candidates develop a comprehensive understanding of literacy concepts and developmental progressions grounded in SoR and the Big 6 skills and competencies. Candidates must demonstrate the ability to plan, deliver, and assess instruction using explicit, systematic, and diagnostic practices that address diverse learning needs and strengths and promote data-driven decision-making. Coursework and clinical experience should show evidence of addressing the following knowledge (k) and skills (s).

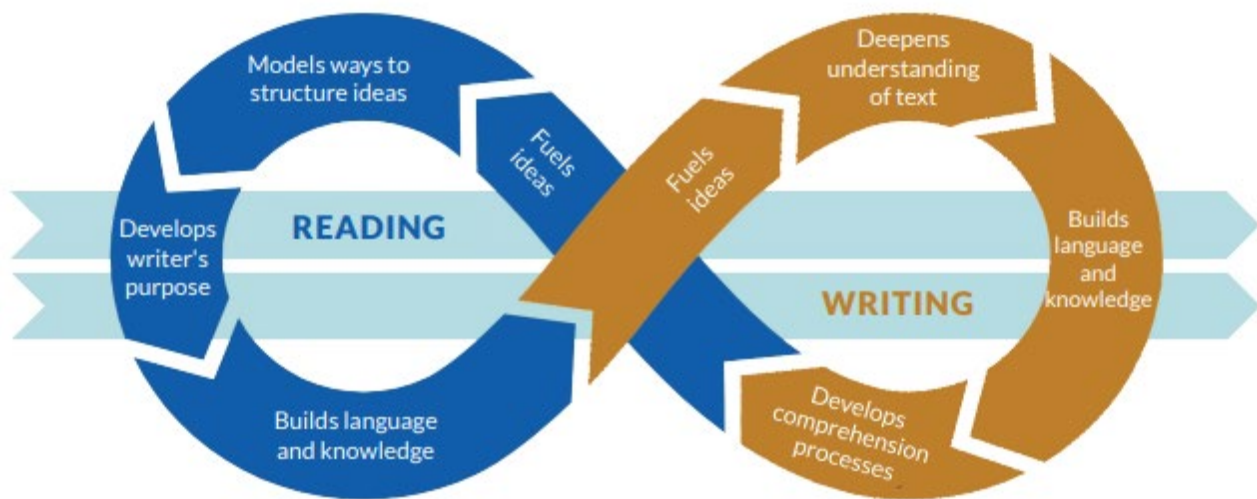
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Big 6 Skills and Competencies

SoR highlights the “Big 6,” which are key skills and competencies that support the development of effective reading and writing. These six components form the foundation of effective literacy instruction and are outlined in [NYSED’s Literacy Briefs](#). Programs should incorporate specific instructional strategies for each of the Big 6 skills and competencies. Candidates must demonstrate proficiency in planning, delivering, and assessing instruction tied to these components. Programs should include experiences that prepare candidates with the following:

- **Oral Language:** Includes speaking and listening, providing the foundation for written language (k). In addition to acquiring this conceptual knowledge, candidates must be prepared to engage in practices that support student learning, which include, but are not limited to:
 - Teaching students relationships between oral language and reading skills (s).
 - Using oral language to support comprehension and vocabulary development (s).
- **Phonological Awareness:** An awareness of speech sounds, whereas phonemic awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate sounds (k). Candidates should understand these concepts and apply them through instruction that fosters student phonological skills, such as:
 - Teaching students how to articulate, isolate, identify, segment, and blend sounds in spoken words (s).
- **Phonics:** An instructional method that involves systematically matching the sounds with the letters that represent the sounds (k). Candidates should be capable of applying this knowledge in instructional practices that develop students’ decoding abilities, including:
 - Teaching phonics to students with sequenced skills and activities (s).
 - Teaching students to apply phonics skills to figure out how to decode unfamiliar words (s).
- **Vocabulary:** A student’s internal dictionary, comprised of words and their meanings (k). Candidates should be able to both understand vocabulary acquisition principles and engage in instructional strategies to develop students’ word knowledge, including:
 - Using a variety of methods to teach all students the meanings of words, including direct and indirect instruction and multiple exposures (s).

- Identifying unfamiliar words in texts using context clues, morphology, and background knowledge to determine their meanings (s).
- Reinforcing vocabulary learning through writing activities, such as sentence construction, word journals, or writing short responses that require students to use newly acquired words in context (s).
- **Fluency:** The ability to read connected text with accuracy, expression, and at an appropriate rate (k). Candidates should apply their knowledge of fluency to instructional practices that improve student reading comprehension, such as:
 - Having students engage in repeated readings to improve words per minute, accuracy, and expression (s).
 - Making instructional decisions based on assessments of students’ oral reading fluency (s).
- **Comprehension:** The complex process and ultimate goal of reading that involves constructing meaning from and interpreting texts (k). Candidates should not only understand the cognitive processes that support comprehension, but also implement instructional strategies that enhance students’ understanding of text, including:
 - Teaching students strategies for understanding text (e.g., graphic organizers, making predictions, asking questions, identifying main ideas) (s).
 - Teaching students to monitor how well they understand what they read (s).
 - Teaching reading using both fiction and nonfiction materials (s).
 - Reinforcing comprehension through written responses, such as summarizing key ideas, paraphrasing passages, or responding to text-based prompts (s).



Structured Literacy

Structured literacy is a comprehensive, evidence-based approach to reading and writing instruction that integrates six key components (phonology, sound-symbol association, syllable instruction, morphology, syntax, and semantics) for literacy development. This approach is designed to meet the needs and

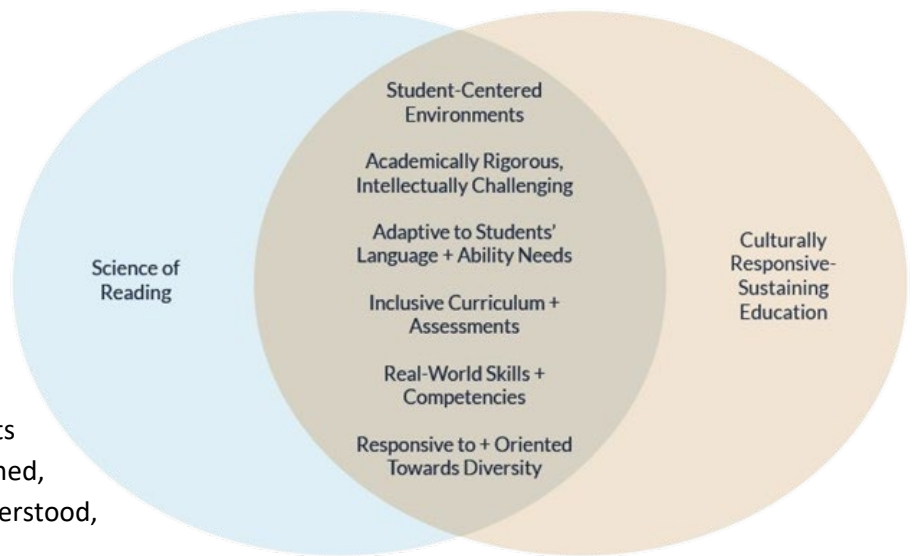
strengths of all students by emphasizing systematic, cumulative, explicit, and diagnostic instruction. Key elements include:

- **Explicit Direct Instruction:** Teaching that provides clear, guided explanations and modeling of literacy skills, including phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies (k). For example, candidates should learn to scaffold instruction by breaking complex texts into manageable sections, model summarization techniques, and support cognitive processes like attention and working memory (s).
- **Systematic and Cumulative Instruction:** Lessons are intentionally sequenced to build upon previously taught concepts, ensuring a logical and cumulative progression of skills (k). Each lesson reinforces prior learning while introducing new, developmentally appropriate content (s).
- **Diagnostic Teaching:** Instruction informed by ongoing, data-driven assessment (k), allowing teachers to tailor lessons to individual student needs and strengths (s).

Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education and SoR

Culturally responsive, inclusive learning environments that are also rooted in SoR practices support students in developing literacy skills for life. These educational environments are:

- **Student-centered:** Students feel welcomed, affirmed, represented, reflected, understood, and valued (k)
 - Candidates design and implement practices that foster positive relationships, affirm students’ cultural identities, and create a welcoming classroom climate (s).
- **Inclusive:** Curriculum, assessments, unit themes, and topics reflect multiple identities, cultures, linguistic diversity, and assets (k)
 - Candidates incorporate culturally relevant materials and instructional practices that reflect and honor student diversity (s).
- **Rigorous:** Experiences are intellectually challenging and adaptive to language and ability needs and strengths (k)
 - Candidates plan and deliver instruction that promotes high expectations, critical thinking, and accommodates varied language and learning needs and strengths (s).



REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. How does your program ensure candidates thoroughly understand the Big 6 skills and competencies and structured literacy?
 - i. How does your program prepare candidates to teach and assess the Big 6 and structured literacy in an integrated manner?
2. What instructional strategies are used to develop candidates' proficiency in these areas, and how are these strategies assessed?
3. How does your program prepare candidates to scaffold instruction and support cognitive processes such as working memory, attention, and executive function during literacy instruction?
4. How does your program address gaps in candidate performance related to foundational literacy skills?
5. What evidence demonstrates that candidates are prepared to apply SoR-aligned strategies in diverse classroom settings?

2. INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING

Objective: To enable candidates to design explicit, systematic, and scaffolded literacy lessons that integrate formative assessments, differentiated instruction, and culturally responsive teaching strategies (k). Candidates should demonstrate the ability to develop cohesive instructional units that align with literacy goals and standards (s), build upon prior knowledge (s), and address the unique needs and strengths of MLLs, students with disabilities, and other diverse populations (s).

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Instructional Design: Candidates must have a strong understanding of SoR principles and high-impact instructional practices (k) in order to create lesson plans that align with literacy goals, build upon prior knowledge, and address the needs and strengths of all learners (s).

- **High-Impact Instructional Practices and Goals**

EPPs should align their coursework and clinical experiences with NYSED’s [PK-3 Literacy Instructional Best Practices Guide](#) and the [Science of Reading Literacy Briefs](#) (k), in addition to relevant [state learning standards](#), all of which provide evidence-based strategies to support literacy development. These resources emphasize practices that include:

- Foundational literacy skill-building (phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, and word study) (k)
- Engagement with diverse, high-interest, and complex texts that students can independently access, progressing from decodable text to more complex texts as students’ skills develop (s)
- Text-based discussions and writing opportunities, including texts that may be above students’ reading levels but delivered through interactive read-alouds and other modalities (s)
- Fostering understanding of print conventions and text features through reading and writing (s)
- Collaborative and culminating projects (k; s)

EPPs should use these resources to design learning experiences that equip candidates with the tools to design lessons that integrate these high-impact practices effectively. By leveraging the PK-3 Best Practices Guide and Literacy Briefs, programs can ensure candidates are prepared to deliver instruction aligned with SoR principles and the cumulative development of literacy skills.

- **Designing SoR-Aligned Unit and Lesson Plans**

Unit and lesson plans (s) should reflect principles outlined in the PK-3 Best Practices Guide and Literacy Briefs (k), incorporating:

- Explicit Objectives tied to the Big 6 skills and competencies and [NYS Next Generation English Language Arts Standards](#).
- Systematic Sequencing of skills to build a strong literacy foundation.
- Scaffolding Strategies to support student proficiency in complex skills.

- Assessment Checkpoints to monitor progress and guide instruction.
- Supports tailored to the needs and strengths of MLLs and students with disabilities.

Assessment: Candidates must have a strong understanding of the role of assessment in literacy instruction and the different types of assessments used to measure student progress (k). They must also understand how to interpret assessment data (k) to inform instruction that is responsive to student needs and strengths (s).

Effective lesson plans incorporate comprehensive assessment strategies to monitor student progress and guide instructional adjustments (s). These plans outline a clear process for using ongoing assessment data to ensure that all students receive targeted support and continue advancing toward their learning goals.

Key Assessment Components:

1. **Universal Screening and Progress Monitoring:** Screening assessments are universally administered to identify striving readers and to establish baseline performance levels (k). Progress monitoring occurs regularly to track student development, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, and inform instructional decisions (s). These assessments are essential for ensuring all students advance toward their learning goals and receive timely, targeted support based on their individual needs and strengths (k).
2. **Universal and Targeted Instructional Approaches:** Lesson plans detail universal instructional strategies for larger groups of students needing support, as well as targeted interventions for small groups or individuals with specific skill needs and strengths (k). These targeted strategies are designed to provide supplemental intervention over a defined period, aligned with clear goals (s).
3. **Action Plans for Striving Students:** For students requiring additional support, lesson plans include action plans that specify the areas of instruction to be adjusted and the skills to be monitored (s). When students make adequate progress, interventions may be tapered; if not, the intensity, frequency, or type of intervention may be adjusted (s).
4. **Continuous Data Collection:** Diagnostic information is continuously collected and referenced in lesson plans (s), ensuring that instructional decisions are always informed by the most current data (k). This approach supports timely adjustments to instruction and intervention, ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed (k).

Key Features of Lesson Plans:

1. **Explicit Direct Instruction:** Lessons include systematic and cumulative teaching of syntax, grammar, and text annotation skills (k). These elements help students understand and navigate

print conventions, features, and functions effectively (k). Instruction is scaffolded, building upon previously taught concepts to deepen understanding and reinforce connections between skills (s). Lessons incorporate formative assessments to measure progress, along with structured opportunities for guided practice and immediate, actionable feedback to ensure proficiency (s).

2. **Text Selection:** Units feature high-interest, knowledge-rich texts that are culturally-responsive, complex, and thematically linked to both the sciences and the humanities (k). These texts are intentionally sequenced to build background knowledge and support the cumulative development of both reading and writing skills (s). Decodable texts play a critical role in early literacy instruction by providing students with opportunities to apply phonics knowledge in controlled contexts, reinforcing foundational reading skills (k). Lessons incorporate both decodable and complex texts, ensuring an approach that develops fluency, comprehension, and the ability to access increasingly challenging materials as students develop their decoding skills (s). Formative and summative assessments are embedded to evaluate comprehension (s), while students are given multiple opportunities to revisit texts and apply learning strategies with support from teacher feedback (s).
3. **Engagement Activities:** Lessons involve text-based discussions, writing activities that encompass all stages of the writing process, and tasks that encourage students to respond to text-based prompts (s). Students write with a clear audience and purpose in mind, utilize graphic organizers, and analyze themes, fostering deep comprehension and engagement (s). These activities include cycles of practice, reflection, formative assessments, and targeted feedback to refine skills and ensure alignment with lesson objectives (s).
4. **Collaborative Projects:** Students participate in collaborative projects, performances, and celebrations that culminate in the creation of planning documents, schedules, and research organizers, allowing them to demonstrate their ability to integrate and transfer knowledge into real-world applications (s). These activities promote social-emotional learning, teamwork, and the application of literacy skills in a supportive, student-centered environment (k). Students receive feedback from both peers and teachers throughout the process, along with rubrics or checklists to monitor progress and assess learning outcomes (s).

Instructional Strategies: Candidates must have a strong understanding of the importance of instructional flexibility and the strategies needed to address diverse learning needs and strengths (k). This includes knowledge of how to create inclusive learning environments that foster engagement and literacy success for all students (k). Candidates must also be able to apply these strategies by designing and delivering instruction that promotes proficiency in literacy skills (s). They should include texts that reflect students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds(s), promoting a sense of belonging and engagement.

Key Instructional Strategies by Configuration:**1. Whole Group Instruction:**

- a. **Read-Alouds with Thematic Connections:** Candidates read aloud texts that align with the unit's theme, allowing students to engage in follow-along literacy tasks (s). This approach supports students' comprehension and vocabulary development across varying skill levels (k).
- b. **Modeling and Think-Alouds:** Candidates explicitly model reading strategies, problem-solving approaches, and annotation techniques to scaffold learning for the entire class (s).

2. Small Group Instruction:

- a. **Targeted Skill Groups:** Candidates create flexible, skill-based groups to provide differentiated instruction on phonics, decoding, or comprehension strategies (s). These groups allow for tailored support based on student needs and strengths (k).
- b. **Support for MLLs:** MLLs receive guided practice in letter-sound correspondence, vocabulary development, and fluency through connected texts (s). Small group settings enable more personalized feedback and interaction (k).

3. Independent and Center-Based Practice:

- a. **Decodable and Highly Decodable Texts for Practice:**
 - i. **Grades K–2:** Students are provided with decodable texts to read independently or at home, reinforcing phonics and fluency skills introduced in class (s).
 - ii. **Grades 3 and Beyond:** For striving readers in grades 3 and beyond, candidates incorporate highly decodable texts that maintain structured phonics patterns while gradually transitioning students into authentic, complex texts aligned with grade-level expectations (s).
- b. **Practice Stations and Centers:** Literacy centers include activities such as word-building games, sentence reconstruction, and fluency practice, allowing students to apply skills at their own pace while candidates monitor and provide support as needed (s).

4. Intervention Settings:

- a. **Individualized Instructional Support:** Candidates offer small group or one-on-one interventions for students requiring intensive support, focusing on foundational literacy skills and targeted areas of growth (s).
- b. **Progress Monitoring and Feedback:** Frequent assessment and feedback loops are embedded to track progress and adjust interventions as needed (s).

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. How does your program ensure that candidates develop and implement unit and lesson plans that align with this framework, emphasizing explicit, systematic, and evidence-based instructional strategies?
2. How does your program prepare candidates to scaffold literacy instruction effectively across various instructional configurations (e.g., whole group, small group, centers, and interventions) to support MLLs and students with disabilities?
3. How does your program ensure candidates incorporate systematic sequencing of literacy skills into their instructional planning?
4. How are candidates taught to design and deliver cycles of practice that include modeling, rehearsing, and enacting evidence-based literacy strategies in authentic classroom settings?
5. How do candidates integrate culturally responsive pedagogy and differentiated instruction into their lesson plans to support diverse learners?
6. How does your program prepare candidates to use formative assessments, universal screening, progress monitoring, and diagnostic assessments to guide instructional decisions for literacy development?
7. How does your program ensure that candidates receive actionable feedback on their instructional plans and practices? How are candidates' lesson plans reviewed and evaluated for alignment with SoR principles and evidence-based practices?
8. How does your program encourage continuous refinement of instructional planning based on candidate performance, student outcomes, and cycles of practice?

3. TEACHING PRACTICE

Objective: To ensure candidates can deliver effective reading and writing instruction using SoR principles (k). Candidates should engage in cycles of modeling, observation, practice, feedback, and refinement (s) to demonstrate proficiency in explicit instruction, guided practice, and independent application of literacy skills (s). Emphasis should be placed on purposeful feedback loops and continuous improvement to enhance teaching effectiveness (k) and promote student learning outcomes (s).

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:

Classroom Environment: Managing a Literacy-Rich Environment Conducive to Learning

Candidates are trained to create welcoming and affirming classroom environments that foster a sense of belonging for all students (k). They develop structured protocols and routines that support whole group instruction, collaborative group work, and independent study, ensuring a well-rounded approach to learning (s). To enhance foundational literacy skills such as phonological awareness, phonics, spelling, and word study (k), candidates should design interactive and engaging learning experiences that encourage active participation and reinforce key concepts (s). These strategies may include visual supports, word-study activities, and hands-on literacy tools that promote skill-building through meaningful practice (s). In early childhood settings, candidates learn to design purposeful play spaces where young learners can actively engage in literacy activities through hands-on, playful experiences that reinforce key literacy concepts (s).

Instructional Delivery: Engaging Students and Promoting Literacy Development through Reading and Writing Lessons

Candidates are prepared to deliver explicit, evidence-based instruction in foundational reading and writing skills (k). They are equipped to model and guide students through structured literacy routines that emphasize direct instruction, guided practice, and independent application of skills (s).

Candidates also learn to integrate high-quality instructional materials to ensure students have regular opportunities to practice and develop both reading and writing skills across genres and disciplines (k). These include informative/explanatory texts (e.g., lab reports, research papers), narratives (e.g., personal essays, short stories), arguments (e.g., opinion pieces, persuasive essays, proposals), and creative texts (e.g., poetry, storyboards) (k). Instruction focuses on modeling strategies, scaffolding tasks, and providing meaningful feedback to support student learning and skill transfer (s).

Candidates engage in cycles of practice, rehearsing delivery techniques, refining their approaches through peer and instructor feedback, and demonstrating the ability to adapt instruction to meet the needs and strengths of all learners, including MLLs and students with disabilities (s).

Purposeful Feedback and Transparent Practice: Improving Teaching Through Observation and Evidence-Based Adjustments

Candidates are equipped to demonstrate and refine their high-impact instructional practices through purposeful feedback loops and transparent teaching methods (k). Candidates engage in cycles of observation, modeling, practice, and feedback to ensure that teaching approaches are reflective and deliberately improved based on evidence and outcomes (s).

During clinical experiences, candidates receive frequent, structured observations followed by specific, actionable feedback focused on instructional delivery and student engagement by faculty, staff, and school-based teacher educators (s). These feedback sessions are guided by clear performance criteria aligned with SoR principles and evidence-based practices (k).

Candidates also learn to analyze student data and outcomes, using assessment results to make data-driven decisions about their teaching strategies (k). Emphasis is placed on identifying what worked, what did not work, and why, leading to targeted instructional adjustments rather than generalized reflections (s).

Additionally, candidates foster collaborative partnerships with families and community stakeholders to ensure their practices are culturally responsive and meet the diverse needs and strengths of learners (s). Through ongoing communication and transparency, candidates develop a deeper understanding of students, promoting equity and inclusion in their learning environments (k).

CLINICAL EXPERIENCES:

Clinical Experiences with a Focus on Literacy Instruction

These hands-on experiences provide candidates with invaluable opportunities to apply the principles of SoR in real classroom settings. Through direct interaction with students, candidates can observe and implement evidence-based literacy practices, receive immediate feedback from experienced school-based teacher educators, and refine their instructional techniques. These clinical experiences allow candidates to understand the diverse literacy needs and strengths of students, including their varying levels of reading and writing proficiency and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. By engaging in these placements, candidates develop the practical skills and competency necessary to create effective literacy instruction that supports all learners in their journey toward reading proficiency. This experiential learning is essential for bridging the gap between theory and practice, ensuring that candidates are fully prepared to foster literacy development in their future learning environments.

EPPs must ensure clinical experiences provide explicit opportunities for candidates to practice SoR-aligned instruction. Candidates should:

- Use diagnostic assessments to identify literacy needs and strengths, and tailor instruction accordingly (s).
- Reflect on and refine their instructional strategies based on feedback and student outcomes (s).

- Design activities that reinforce reading and writing skills, such as summarizing texts to enhance comprehension or practicing spelling to support phonics (s).
- Scaffold literacy instruction to meet the needs and strengths of diverse learners, including MLLs and students with disabilities (s).

Mentorship and Coaching by Demonstrably Effective Educators with SoR Expertise

Experienced school-based teacher educators with a proven track record of literacy success guide candidates by providing practical, evidence-based insights into effective literacy instruction strategies. By working closely with individuals with deep knowledge of SoR, candidates gain access to a wealth of experience and best practices that go beyond textbook learning. This close, supportive relationship allows candidates to observe expert instruction in action, receive personalized feedback on their teaching methods, and engage in reflective discussions that deepen their understanding of how to implement high-impact literacy practices. Mentorship and instructional coaching not only accelerate the professional growth of candidates but also ensure that they are equipped to deliver literacy instruction that meets the needs and strengths of all students, thereby fostering a stronger foundation for their future success as educators.

Participation in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Participation in professional learning communities (PLCs) is a vital aspect of teacher preparation, particularly as it relates to literacy instruction. PLCs may be embedded within EPPs or developed in partnership with local education agencies (LEAs) or clinical placement sites to ensure candidates experience collaborative, practice-based learning environments.

How PLCs are Structured:

- **Within EPPs:** PLCs can be incorporated into coursework, seminar discussions, or cohort-based activities focused on SoR practices. Candidates engage in case studies, lesson analysis, and peer review cycles to examine and refine instructional strategies.
- **Through Partnerships:** EPPs may collaborate with partner LEAs to create school-based PLCs where candidates observe, participate in, and contribute to ongoing collaborative planning and problem-solving sessions with practicing educators and literacy coaches.

Purpose and Benefits:

Engaging in PLCs provides candidates with structured opportunities to:

- Collaborate with peers and experienced educators to discuss challenges, share insights, and explore evidence-based practices in literacy instruction.
- Analyze student data and instructional strategies to reflect on and improve teaching practices.
- Stay updated on current research and innovations in literacy education.
- Build professional networks that support continued growth and collaboration as they transition into the teaching workforce.

By participating in ongoing cycles of inquiry, observation, and feedback, candidates cultivate a mindset of continuous improvement and lifelong learning. These experiences ensure that candidates are prepared to collaborate effectively with colleagues in their future roles, contributing to the ongoing improvement of literacy instruction and student outcomes.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. How does your program ensure candidates have meaningful opportunities to apply SoR-aligned strategies during clinical experiences?
2. How does your program ensure that school-based teacher educators provide actionable, evidence-based feedback on candidates' ability to deliver explicit, systematic literacy instruction?
3. How does your program assess candidates' ability to adapt instruction for diverse learners, including MLLs and students with disabilities, and ensure consistency in feedback across multiple placements and mentors?
4. How does your program facilitate school-based teacher educator calibration sessions to ensure consistency and alignment in feedback on candidate performance during clinical experiences?
5. What evidence demonstrates that SoR practices are consistently applied across coursework and clinical experiences?
6. How does your program integrate PLCs into coursework, clinical experiences, or partnerships with LEAs to promote collaboration, data analysis, and ongoing professional learning aligned with SoR practices?

III. PROGRAM INTEGRATION GUIDELINES

EPPs play a critical role in preparing future teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to support literacy development for all students. Many EPPs have already taken significant steps to align their coursework, clinical experiences, and assessments with evidence-based literacy instruction, and some may already be fully aligned with SoR principles. This section offers suggestions and considerations for programs seeking to deepen and sustain this work, providing opportunities for reflection and enhancement. While not prescriptive, these guidelines aim to support EPPs in fostering collaboration among faculty, staff, school-based teacher educators, and partner LEAs, ensuring that SoR-aligned instruction remains embedded in program structures, professional learning, and continuous improvement efforts.

1. **Integration into Curriculum:** EPPs should review their courses for SoR principles regularly (e.g., annually) and ensure alignment with state and national standards that are informed by research and evidence-based practices.
 - Review program curricula scope and sequence for alignment with SoR foundations, competencies, activities, and experiences.
 - When multiple faculty members teach the same course, conduct a review of syllabi, assessments, and evaluations to ensure consistency and inter-rater reliability.
 - Audit instructional environments, experiences, and clinical experiences across each educational level and program, including how the fieldwork hours are used and candidates' experiences with SoR practices.
 - Ensure candidates are provided with the knowledge and opportunity to implement culturally and linguistically responsive-sustaining education practices for inclusion, belonging, and academic rigor.

2. **Evaluation of Culminating Assignments:** EPPs should systematically review course-level culminating assignments to ensure they reflect comprehensive aspects of SoR-aligned instruction. This process includes evaluating the effectiveness of these assignments through rubric reviews and analysis of candidate performance scores.
 - Establish a schedule for regular reviews of culminating assignments to ensure they are aligned with SoR principles and effectively measure candidate proficiency in key literacy competencies.
 - Evaluate the rubrics used for these assignments to ensure they:
 - include clear criteria for assessing candidates' abilities to design, implement, and evaluate instructional practices aligned with SoR principles,
 - adequately assess the full range of candidate skills and knowledge in key competencies, and

- address instructional adaptations, diagnostic teaching, and the integration of oral language, phonics, and comprehension strategies.
 - Use candidate scores from these assignments to identify trends in performance, strengths, and areas needing improvement. This data should inform curricular adjustments and targeted support for candidates.
 - Ensure that the culminating assignments assess multiple facets of SoR-aligned instruction, including planning, implementation, assessment, and reflection, providing a comprehensive picture of candidate readiness.
 - Use insights from the evaluation process to provide candidates with actionable feedback that supports their growth and aligns with SoR principles.
3. **Inclusion in the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA):** Each TPA at the EPP should provide evidence of foundational pedagogical knowledge and instructional planning specific to SoR for candidates pursuing certification. Examples of this may include:
- Include evidence of candidates' skills in using data-driven assessment practices to inform and adjust literacy instruction.
 - Demonstrate candidate proficiency in the assessment and teaching of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency, comprehension, including background knowledge, oral language and writing, and oral skill development, and align with NYSED's [Culturally Responsive-Sustaining Education Framework](#).
 - Assess candidates' ability to design and implement literacy instruction that addresses the diverse needs and strengths of learners, including MLLs and students with disabilities.
 - Evaluate candidates' capacity to integrate culturally responsive-sustaining education literacy practices into their lesson plans and instructional strategies.
4. **Professional Learning:** Faculty, staff, and school-based teacher educators should receive ongoing professional learning in SoR, informed by program needs, candidate performance data, and faculty and staff requests, to effectively support candidates.
- Professional learning for faculty, staff, and school-based teacher educators should focus on:
 - Application of SoR principles in planning, instruction, and assessment.
 - Supporting candidates in using explicit, systematic, and differentiated literacy instruction.
 - Conducting collaborative sessions at least annually to align practices and share effective strategies.
 - Using data from candidate performance to refine mentorship approaches and address gaps in preparation.
 - Faculty, staff, and school-based teacher educators should be provided with regular meeting time for collaboration and regular, on-site coaching and professional learning connected to strategic priorities and new initiatives.

- School-based teacher educators should receive structured, evidence-based training to support candidates in implementing SoR practices. This training should include clear expectations, instructional modeling, feedback techniques, and opportunities for collaboration with EPP faculty.
 - Review faculty, staff, and school-based teacher educators’ academic qualifications, professional experience, and demonstrated expertise in literacy instruction—including publications, presentations, and training, where appropriate—to ensure alignment with SoR principles. Professional learning opportunities should build on their content knowledge and practical experience while addressing areas for growth and aligning with program goals and candidate needs.
 - Program leadership should demonstrate a commitment to building educators’ capacity for success by providing dedicated resources, time, and support for professional learning. This includes fostering a culture of continuous improvement and ensuring alignment between program goals and the evolving needs of faculty, staff, school-based teacher educators, and candidates.
5. **Collaboration and Support:** Establish formalized [partnerships](#) with LEAs to provide authentic clinical experiences aligned with SoR principles and facilitate a supportive learning environment for candidates. These partnerships should include structured feedback, co-planning opportunities, and collaborative support for candidates.
- Program faculty should familiarize themselves with their partner LEAs’ vertical instructional alignment across early elementary, elementary, and secondary learning environments to prepare candidates for clinical experiences.
 - Feedback should be normalized as transparent and sustainable data use, where methods, practices, and processes are shared among stakeholders.
6. **Continuous Improvement:** EPPs should conduct annual reviews of their literacy coursework to incorporate new research, analyze disaggregated candidate performance data, and address gaps identified through stakeholder feedback.
- EPP leadership should be actively engaged in driving improvement initiatives and should facilitate ongoing conversations around program missions, visions, and beliefs.
 - Strategic team meetings should be held regularly to calibrate protocol use and commit to grounding all decisions and program revisions in evidence.
 - EPP leadership should establish a systematic process for evaluating coursework, clinical experiences, and candidate outcomes in alignment with SoR principles. Regular review meetings should:
 - Analyze trends in candidate performance and clinical experience feedback.
 - Use these findings to inform curriculum updates and instructional practices.
 - Ensure alignment between program goals and the evolving needs of partner LEAs.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

1. How does your program ensure alignment with state and national standards and the latest evidence-based research in SoR?
2. What systems are in place to conduct regular reviews of syllabi, assessments, and clinical experience placements for SoR alignment?
3. How are disaggregated candidate performance data and stakeholder feedback used to inform program revisions?
4. What professional learning opportunities are provided to ensure faculty, staff, and school-based teacher educators remain up-to-date with SoR principles?
5. What processes ensure that professional learning reflects the latest evidence-based research in SoR and addresses faculty, staff, and school-based teacher educator needs?
6. What evidence demonstrates the effectiveness of program integration efforts in improving candidate outcomes?

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