



OHIO
UNIVERSITY

BEFORE THE HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**REPRESENTATIVE TOM YOUNG
CHAIR**

**TESTIMONY
OF
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OHIO UNIVERSITY**

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Chair Young, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and House Higher Education Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify about Ohio University's implementation of the Science of Reading into our curricula. My name is Lisa Harrison and I serve as the interim dean of the Patton College of Education at Ohio University. Within this testimony I will provide an overview of how literacy education is currently embedded throughout our various teacher preparation programs and curricula alignment to the Science of Reading, faculty professional development in the Science of Reading, our clinical model approach to teacher preparation that is in partnership with schools districts, the efforts of the Stevens Literacy Center to support literacy and workforce development within Southeast Ohio, and our course of action to be in full compliance with Ohio's legislatively mandated literacy initiative.

The Patton College of Education

The Patton College offers several paths to earning a teaching license. Our programs are grounded in national and state standards and embrace a clinical model of teacher education with a strong connection to field experiences. In our 136-year history, we've built a nationally acclaimed model of educating and supporting students that centers on positively impacting P-12 student learning. Our teacher preparation program has been honored by the National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS) and highlighted in the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's Research to Practice Spotlight Series. Our faculty members are also nationally recognized for their leadership and research in their respective fields. I am particularly proud of our Reading Education faculty members who support literacy efforts through teacher education and in partnership with local school districts.

Current Implementation

The reading faculty in The Patton College of Education have taught various aspects of the Science of Reading (SoR) for many years and continue to incorporate it into our courses. The outcome of their efforts is reflected in the A rating on the recently released Thomas B. Fordham Institute Report focused on Ohio teacher education programs implementation of the Science of Reading. Much of our curriculum focused on the 2000 National Reading Panel report which has incorporated the five pillars of reading instruction (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension), and we have gradually moved towards teaching the pillars with a Science of Reading approach along with Scarborough's Reading Rope and the Simple View of Reading. Thus, even before the new mandates were developed, we have been able to efficiently transition our reading education courses to be grounded in a Science of Reading approach to teaching reading.

Our faculty have all received some Science of Reading training through either Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training, which is a comprehensive professional development designed to provide early childhood and elementary educators and administrators with deep knowledge to be literacy and language experts in the Science of Reading, or as part of their doctoral studies. They have intentionally infused aspects of their Science of Reading training into our courses to better equip both our undergraduate and graduate candidates for Science of Reading classroom instruction. This work extends for teacher candidates in all licensure bands. We currently have faculty involved in work with a grant from the Ohio Dean's Compact to create materials for the incorporation of Science of Reading into our content area literacy course for middle childhood, adolescent young adult, intervention specialist and multi-age licensure teacher candidates.

Faculty in the reading education program see the value and stress the explicit and systematic instructional approach that is a key part of Science of Reading. They have incorporated lesson planning that uses a more “I do, we do, you do” approach that focuses on modeling and intentional practice to ensure mastery and generalization of concepts to different texts that can be used independently. While humans are wired for language, the brain is not naturally wired for reading, making it very difficult for many. Therefore, we prepare our teacher candidates to teach using systematic and explicit instruction. We continually present ideas to make this explicit instruction engaging to P-12 students and hope it translates into a love of reading.

Due to the Patton College of Education extensive clinical model of teacher preparation, based on mutually beneficial partnerships with school districts, our teacher candidates have been able to see this transition and instruction based on the Science of Reading in the classroom setting. This provides vital connections of theory to practice. This also allows for greater reflection on researched based practices and differentiation to meet the individual needs of each P-12 student.

Our Licensure Programs

The reading program within the Patton College of Education provides literacy courses to all teacher preparation programs within The Patton College of Education. The reading faculty also collaborates with various faculty members across the department of Teacher Education so that our teacher candidates are well prepared as they enter their own classrooms. These teacher licensure programs include Early Childhood and Elementary Education (P-5), Middle Childhood Education (4-9), Intervention Specialist (K-12), Adolescent to Young Adult (7-12), and Multi-Age programs such as Health and Physical Education, Modern Languages, and Music Education.

The Early Childhood and Elementary Education Program (ECEE) provides coursework to prepare teacher candidates to teach in Preschool to 5th grade classrooms. Literacy courses for this licensure band are specifically designed with the intent of providing teacher candidates with the necessary tools to give Preschool to 5th grade students the foundational skills needed to become great readers and writers. The coursework for these grade bands include the 12-hour core Science of Reading Standards legislated by the state.

ECEE and Reading faculty have collaborated to mindfully sequence the courses to build upon each other. They are paired with clinical experiences in which the teacher candidates can see examples in the classroom. Teacher candidates in this program have extensive classroom experiences that begin during their sophomore year and are infused through the remainder of their teacher preparation programming. All of these experiences are active experiences in which candidates are able to not only observe from mentor teachers, but are also given multiple opportunities to teach reading using the methods from their coursework. This allows candidates to make impactful connections between theory and practice.

The Middle Childhood Education Program (MCE) provides coursework to prepare teacher candidates to teach in 4th to 9th grade classrooms. Teacher candidates in this licensure band choose two content area focuses (Math, Science, Social Studies, or English Language Arts). Literacy courses are differentiated for this licensure band to accommodate for a more content area focus while still providing foundational reading skills. The coursework for these grade bands include the 12-hour core Science of Reading Standards legislated by the state. These courses are also thoughtfully sequenced with prerequisite skills and clinical experiences in mind.

The Intervention Specialist Program provides coursework to prepare teacher candidates to teach K-12 students with both mild to moderate (MM) and moderate to intensive (MI)

disabilities. Literacy courses for this licensure area are differentiated to provide teacher candidates with a wide scope of grade bands and various skill development to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The coursework for these grade bands include the 12-hour core Science of Reading Standards that have been legislated by the state. These courses are also thoughtfully sequenced with prerequisite skills and clinical experiences in mind.

The Adolescent to Young Adult Program (AYA) provides coursework to prepare candidates to teach in 7th to 12th grade classrooms. Teacher candidates in this licensure band choose a content area focus (ex. math, social studies, language arts, science). Given the focus for these candidates mainly falls on their knowledge of their chosen content area, these candidates are only required to complete the Teaching Literacy in the Content Areas course. This course aligns with the State of Ohio's Three Hour Reading in Content Standards. This course integrates literacy skills involved in the various content areas. This is also the program requirement for those candidates seeking multi-age licensure.

To ensure that students understand and are well prepared to teach the science of reading, the faculty have mindfully designed assessments for each course that align with the core standards. Faculty meet both formally and informally multiple times during each semester to reflect on the effectiveness of the assessments and the instruction. Faculty also reflect on the impact of this work in the clinical practice of their teacher preparation programming, as well as the impact of faculty professional development on Science of Reading implementation.

OUR Clinical Model of Teacher Preparation

One of The Patton College's points of pride is our clinical model of teacher preparation that affords our teacher candidates the opportunity to be engaged in the P-12 classroom early and often in their teacher preparation. For example, our early childhood and elementary education

teacher candidates spend 300 hours in PreK classrooms before moving into their elementary school clinical experiences. In the elementary classrooms, they spend approximately 750 hours over three semesters engaged in K-5 classrooms where they work with experienced mentor teachers to observe, plan, teach, assess, and reflect upon their teaching. This is all before their full-time professional internships where they are in schools everyday, all day for 16 weeks prior to graduation.

The OHIO Center for Clinical Practice in Education has developed an extensive network of partnering schools allowing our teacher candidates to experience a variety of classrooms in multiple and diverse settings. In recent years, these partner schools worked hard to align their curriculum with the Science of Reading. This allows our candidates to see the alignment between concepts discussed in their courses at Ohio University to the instruction they observe in the P-12 classrooms in which they complete their clinical experiences. This leads to great opportunities to reflect on assessment, instruction, and practice in terms of explicit and systematic instruction and the Science of Reading. Thus, teacher candidates are better able to identify what practices adhere to the Science of Reading.

The reciprocal relationships that are part of the partnership structure of clinical practice have allowed for some impactful collaborations. As local school districts have been busy choosing Science of Reading curriculum and materials, the reading department faculty has worked on compiling a list of the various programs that partner school districts have chosen. By becoming more familiar with each curriculum, the faculty can use examples in the reading coursework, which can allow teacher candidates to make stronger connections between their preparation and their own teaching. Along the same lines, teacher candidates often assist mentor teachers by helping with small group instruction. Familiarity with the program used can greatly

improve instruction and the impact of these partnerships on P-12 student learning and teacher preparation.

As our school-based teacher educators, we so appreciate the work of our P-12 mentor teachers and administrators as we engage in these mutually beneficial relationships where we learn with and from one another. One example of the power of these impactful relationships on teacher preparation was when our Alexander Local School District partners, one of our school-university partnerships that was recently recognized by the Ohio Association of Colleges for Teacher Education with the 2023 Celebration Award, invited our teacher candidates, professional interns, and faculty to engage in a daylong professional development that included the Science of Reading. Our Patton College candidates, interns, and faculty were able to engage in this learning alongside the Alexander Local mentor teachers and administrators. This opportunity not only helped to further develop our future teachers but also helped to reinforce the pedagogical concepts about the Science of Reading that they were learning on our Ohio University campus.

The Stevens Literacy Center - Impact on the Region

The Stevens Literacy Center is located in the Patton College of Education. The center is engaged in community outreach in numerous, diverse relationships with local schools, businesses, and other community agencies. This work supports the missions of The Patton College of Education and Ohio University. The center houses the Helen Mansfield Robinson Center for Reading which provides community literacy and education programs including summer camps, after-school Literacy+ STEM clubs for children, and family literacy programs.

The Stevens Literacy Center conducts research and creative activities to provide current teaching practices, curriculum, and resources to teacher candidates, local educators, and

community families. The center houses a vast collection of award-winning children's books as well as an expanding Science of Reading materials repository for faculty and teacher candidates to use in their coursework and clinical placements in schools.

The Stevens Literacy Center supports the OHIO Career Ready Campus, which provides adult basic education, GED preparation, workforce training, and career development programs. The OHIO Career Ready Campus is fully funded by the Ohio Department of Higher Education Aspire program. Ohio University was the first institution of higher education to receive the Aspire grant in 2018 and recently won the Chancellor's Award for adult student performance. The program administrator and instructors recently completed the Student Achievement in Reading (STAR) training – a national professional development initiative for adult reading instruction created by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE).

Moving Forward/Timeline

While we have long embraced the Science of Reading in our work to prepare teachers and improve literacy in the region, we have additional work ahead to ensure full alignment with the recently adopted state standards. The Reading Education program faculty are currently in the process of updating all of their course syllabi to include the new Science of Reading Standards for the state of Ohio. As part of this process, they are looking for any gaps that might exist within each licensure band program that we serve. Our reading faculty will convene regular meetings during the summer months to collaborate on transition work and make decisions regarding the integration of standards and completion of syllabi changes. We have been in contact with Dr. Krista Maxson at ODHE to potentially obtain funding to help with the effort. Part of this funding, if approved, will be used to hire a Science of Reading Consultant to ensure

that our work is properly aligned. We are slated to have all of the new syllabi ready for the fall 2024 semester but will continue to collaborate with all reading faculty to reflect upon the implementation of changes across all reading courses into the new academic year and beyond. We expect to be in full compliance with the updated Reading and Literacy standards before the end of Fall 2024 semester.