



**House Higher Education Committee Testimony**  
**Shawnee State University**  
**Dr. Gay Lynn Shipley, Assistant Dean and Director of School of Education**  
**Dr. Sandra Beam, Professor, School of Education**  
**June 12, 2024**

Chairman Young, Vice-Chair Manning, Ranking Member Miller, and members of the House Higher Education Committee. My name is Dr. Gay Lynn Shipley, and I am the Assistant Dean and Director of the Shawnee State University School of Education. Thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today on the ongoing implementation of the Science of Reading as enacted by the Ohio General Assembly in HB33. Before I begin, I would like to introduce my colleague Dr. Sandra Beam, Professor of Reading who is with me today. I am very happy to provide testimony on the actions Shawnee State's School of Education has taken and initiatives in-progress to ensure that Ohio's pre-service teachers are provided Science of Reading aligned curriculum in our Educator Preparation Programs.

Our School of Education serves over 322 students, and we have 85 graduates on average from our Education Preparation Programs every year. Our dedicated Reading Program faculty and our full faculty group have worked diligently to integrate the Science of Reading into our curriculum.

The foundation of our implementation is our faculty who are responsible for teaching all reading coursework to education majors. Joining Dr. Beam is Mrs. Paula Nance, a part-time faculty member. Both Dr. Beam and Mrs. Nance have been trained in Volumes 1 & 2 of LETRS. They have integrated Science of Reading concepts into the 12-credit hour core reading curriculum in our programs. Additionally, both professors regularly attend the Ohio Dean's Compact meetings, which often reinforce Science of Reading concepts through guest speakers and breakout professional development sessions. Dr. Beam serves in the role of National Professional Learning Facilitator for LETRS and trains teachers across the country in Science of Reading. This role requires Dr. Beam to complete 16 hours of professional development to further her understanding of Science of Reading content.

In 2022, SSU partnered with the Dean's Compact to recruit 150+ teachers across southern Ohio to participate in the All Ohio Literacy modules related to learning about the Science of Reading. In addition to these teachers, ten of our SSU faculty and staff in the School of Education also participated in completing the modules and the professional development sessions. This high rate of participation by our SSU School of Education staff shows a commitment to learning about the Science of Reading to ensure that everyone has a basic understanding of these ideas

and can reinforce those concepts through the School of Education curriculum. This also ensures our graduates can put these concepts into practice as they enter the profession.

Our small size ensures consistency between the reading coursework at our institution. As only two faculty members teach all reading coursework, these professors are able to collaborate regularly in reading program meetings to ensure content is relevant and appropriate for teacher candidates. Both Dr. Beam and Ms. Nance have been supportive of learning about the Science of Reading and integrating this information into our 12-hour reading core.

We are also ensuring that our preservice teachers are well-prepared to teach the Science of Reading in the classroom. In 2020-2021, SSU received a grant from the Ohio Dean's Compact to revise the 12-hour reading coursework to be more aligned with the Science of Reading. During this grant year and the subsequent academic year, extensive work was done within these courses to integrate research in the Science of Reading so that students would receive information related to both the theory and practice of these concepts. Recently, in the 2023-24 academic year, the Ohio Dean's Compact awarded SSU with an additional grant to focus on further revisions to the one course related to adolescent literacy, SSU's EDRE 3305 Content Area Reading. As part of this grant, both Mrs. Nance and Dr. Beam were able to engage in professional development focused on integrating Science of Reading content for students in grades 6-12. Through meetings and collaborations, additional revisions were made to the EDRE 3305 course to help better prepare SSU's middle and adolescent/young adult educators.

SSU is currently wrapping up a two-year grant provided by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce valued at \$560,000+. This program, titled Literacy Leaps, focused on implementing structured literacy tutoring to two partner area elementary schools, Stanton Primary and Portsmouth West. SSU undergraduate education majors were hired to provide small group tutoring experiences three to four times a week in 30-minute sessions to students in grades K-4. The curriculum used was From Phonics to Reading created by Wiley Blevins. In addition to gaining experience using this curriculum, student tutors also participated in monthly professional development sessions directly with Wiley Blevins. There are many positive data points from this tutoring initiative; for example, in the first year of the program all kindergarten students at Stanton Primary receiving the Literacy Leaps intervention were identified as "urgent intervention" on the STAR Literacy assessment. After participating in one year of tutoring, zero kindergarten students remained in the "urgent intervention" category. In year two of the program, we were able to expand tutoring to a second site and bring in more family and community engagement experiences. This included running family literacy nights, providing summer school tutoring, and the purchase of Science of Reading based materials for the public library to integrate into their catalog system for families to check out at no cost. SSU students were actively involved in all aspects of Literacy Leaps, providing them with substantial experiences in Science of Reading implementation.

Literacy Leaps has been invited to speak at professional development trainings across the state to share in the success of this grant program. This tutoring initiative was also featured in an issue of Cornerstone Connections published by the Ohio Leadership Advisory Council (see:

<https://ohioleadership.org/cornerstone-connections/cc-2023-04-12> ). As related to student preparedness, in this article, student Ashley Smith states, “Teacher education candidates serving as tutors are gaining valuable experiences because of the alignment between what is taught by Dr. Beam in their coursework and what they’re using to support children. We see direct alignment strategies we’re using in tutoring sessions and the strategies that we talked about in our phonics or Foundations of Reading course.”

SSU also provides an AmeriCorps funded program titled Project Bear. Students who participate in this program receive numerous hours of field experiences in early literacy classrooms across southeastern Ohio. In the 2022-23 academic year, Project Bear serviced over 800 students in a variety of classrooms. Project Bear also provides monthly professional development to its undergraduate tutors, regularly focused on the Science of Reading. The SSU School of Education is partnering with Project Bear to offer it’s first Science of Reading Symposium in July, 2024. This on campus event invites teachers from across the state and surrounding areas to engage in professional development focused on better understanding the Science of Reading. SSU seeks to be a well-respected and important resource to provide professional development in literacy training to teacher candidates and school district partners within our region.

In our implementation we have understood that assessment of our student outcomes and programs is critical for progress tracking and continuous improvement. SSU annually reviews student OAE data related to the state 190 Reading exam. Students were required to begin taking this exam on January 29, 2023. This most recent year, SSU students had an 89% pass rate on this exam, which was a 22% increase from our first year of requiring the exam. OAE student data is analyzed in-depth so professors can see which content scores high and which content is an area of confusion for students. Then, adjustments are made to the class content that corresponds to the area for improvement. Additionally, SSU students must maintain a 3.0 GPA in content area coursework, therefore student grades are reviewed on an individual basis each semester during advising.

SSU faculty and staff maintain state approved licensure programs through the Ohio Department of Higher Education and national accreditation through the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. These approvals require regular data collection, analysis, and implementation for change.

In addition to consistent review of OAE Foundations of Reading data, the SSU School of Education faculty participate multiple times throughout the year in collaborative conversations about content being covered in coursework. The faculty is receptive to learning about and implementing emerging research in an effort to best prepare teacher candidates. Programs undergo standards review and alignment efforts in order to identify where teacher candidates are first introduced to concepts and then where those concepts are reinforced in later coursework.

The common required text used in our two of our reading courses is the Teaching Reading Sourcebook from the Core Literacy Library reference series. The use of this text in both EDRE

2202 Foundations of Literacy and EDRE 2204 Teaching Phonics is a cost-saving to our students. There are currently no required texts for EDRE 3305 Content Area Literacy or EDRE 3287 Literacy Evaluation & Assessment. Professors utilize free resources for both of these courses, such as journal publications available through university library access. In addition to the updated curriculum centered around the Science of Reading, we do incorporate the history of teaching reading as a part of EDRE 2202 Foundations of Literacy. This includes SSU students learning about the three-cuing system. Students do not learn three cueing as a current strategy for implementation for literacy teaching. In this same course, students learn about running records as part of learning about the overall history of reading instruction. Additionally, students are taught the symbols in one lecture to improve their awareness and understanding of the topic. Students are not trained in how to calculate miscue analysis related to a running record or how to then use the running record assessment data for any guided reading leveled purpose.

In support of teaching this historical context, we want to ensure our teacher candidates have familiarity to be prepared for their 190 Foundations of Reading assessment. The OAE provides sample test-prep questions for the exam including a sample essay question that is a running record. This essay practice question has students look at a sample fluency assessment, using similar running record symbols, and then asks the student taking the test to analyze the sample. Since this is the provided practice question by the actual assessment, SSU believes teaching the running record assessment system is valid.

As a final description of our literacy curriculum, SSU teaches a structured literacy approach. We teach the theoretical models of the Simple View of Reading (Gough & Tunmer, 1986), Scarborough's Reading Rope (Scarborough, 2001), the Reading Brain (Dehaene, 2011), and the Four-Part Processing Model (Seidenberg & McClelland, 1989). These theoretical foundations are taught throughout the 12-hour reading coursework. Students learn about systematic phonemic awareness and phonics curriculum, such as Heggerty and Orton Gillingham. Students receive instruction on the 5 Big Ideas of Literacy Instruction created by the National Reading Panel in 2000. SSU graduates have a high understanding of how to implement a structured literacy curriculum.

SSU has made significant progress in our Educator Preparation Programs in aligning our literacy curriculum to the Science of Reading. This is thanks to the support from the Dean's Compact and DEW, the dedication of our faculty, and the ability to work collaboratively with our P-12 partner schools to give our teacher candidates practice in the classroom setting. We anticipate that the upcoming DEW audit will find that we have met the requirements of HB 33.

Thank you, Chairman Young and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify on Shawnee State University School of Education's preparation for and implementation of the Science of Reading in our Educator Preparation Programs.