February 16, 2023

Dear Members of the North Carolina General Assembly,

I am pleased to submit the enclosed report in fulfillment of section 8.4(a) of S.L. 2021-180, which called on the UNC System Board of Governors to engage a third-party evaluator to assess the "baseline of the current coursework in literacy training and intervention strategies and practices at EPPs." Teacher Preparation Inspection-US (TPI-US) was chosen as the reviewer, and the reviewers' statewide results are enclosed here.

Learning to read is the gateway to a successful life, and the science of reading is a top priority for my administration and the Board of Governors. Students who can read on grade level by the end of third grade are much more likely to graduate from high school, enroll in college, earn a degree, and achieve a family-sustaining wage.

Unfortunately, federal and state assessment data show that too many of North Carolina's third graders are not proficient in reading. The latest data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that between 2020 and 2022, the United States saw the largest drop in reading scores since 1980. Pre-pandemic, just 36 percent of North Carolina fourth graders could read proficiently. That number dropped to 32 percent in 2022, with nearly 40 percent of fourth graders scoring below basic. That has alarming implications for the future of our state, and tragic implications for the individual students who have not been given a solid foundation in basic literacy.

As the main source of teaching talent for the public schools in North Carolina, the UNC System must play a leading role in addressing these shortcomings. We know the most effective ways to teach reading — direct instruction focused on oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, comprehension and vocabulary. We must ensure that every teaching candidate graduating from our universities is well-versed in these concepts and prepared to effectively employ them in classrooms across our state.

In 2020, the Board passed a resolution that called on the System to develop a common framework for literacy that all EPP's would adopt. Faculty from our own Schools of Education developed that framework, and each program was required to identify any discrepancies between the framework and their coursework and set an action plan to address them. In parallel, we've enrolled over 200 faculty, lab school teachers, and teaching candidates in the Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS), the same training being taken by teachers across the state. Those cohorts of faculty, teachers, and teaching candidates will complete the two-year training this spring.

I'm grateful to the General Assembly for providing us the opportunity to review the baseline of coursework in literacy across our educator preparation programs, so that we can effectively assess our progress and identify opportunities for improvement. As the enclosed reports indicate, we have more work to do in fully integrating the Science of Reading into required coursework, as mandated under the Excellent Public Schools Act.

We are proud to have an exemplar program in UNC Charlotte, where excellence in teacher education reflects a decade of thoughtful work by faculty, staff, and a succession of deans committed to evidence-based early literacy. Charlotte's program can provide a model for others across the state — and nationally, since we know this challenge is not confined to North Carolina. UNC Charlotte's success is also powerful evidence for the impact of sustained attention to these issues at the highest levels of leadership, including chancellors and provosts. Organizational change does not always happen quickly, so commitment from leadership is crucial for ensuring lasting reform.

Five additional programs are clearly moving in the right direction and are committed to progressing from "good" to "strong." In each case, the review results provided leadership and faculty with concrete recommendations for how to improve individual courses and course sequences.

However, the majority of our programs were rated "needs improvement" or "inadequate," which is simply not acceptable. In many cases, underperforming programs were found to have high-quality courses—often in the special education program—but lacked a coordinated, consistent approach to literacy instruction across elementary and special education. In a small number of cases, the reviewers found faculty resistant to change.

The Board of Governors and System Office have moved aggressively to correct these deficiencies, requiring all programs to address areas in need of improvement by the end of this fiscal year. Programs must provide the UNC System with evidence of the actions taken to align coursework with expectations. If an educator preparation program does not provide sufficient evidence of actions taken, the chancellor, provost, and dean must present to the Board of Governors' Committee on Educational Planning, Policies, and Programs at its next scheduled meeting to discuss their performance.

To support this work, we've used System Office resources to extend our partnership with TPI-US so that we can provide additional assistance and coaching to programs that are most in need of improvement. In addition, at the request of other campuses in our System, the UNC System Office will hold workshops where faculty and campus leaders can learn about best practices from high-performing programs, including UNC Charlotte's Cato College of Education.

Finally, I will continue to hold the chancellors of our constituent institutions accountable for their efforts to improve teacher preparation in literacy. Leaders at every university in our System have been clearly informed that this is a top priority for our University and our state.

This additional support and accountability will ensure that every program in our public universities is not only aligned with the expectations in the Excellent Public Schools Act, but prepares every elementary and special education graduate to be an effective reading instructor from their first day on the job. We are grateful for the General Assembly's commitment to this shared goal.

Sincerely,

Peter Hans
President

**Report to the North Carolina General Assembly
on Science of Reading Educator Preparation Programs Coursework Implementation
Fall 2022**

Executive Summary

Teacher Prep Inspection-US (TPI-US) shares North Carolina's commitment to advancing reading proficiency for every student. We are grateful for the opportunity to conduct this review of literacy coursework across the 30 public and private North Carolina institutions that train teachers for the state's schools. This report to the North Carolina General Assembly presents key findings and recommendations for continued improvement of literacy coursework and teacher candidate preparation across 30 institutions, identifies outcomes and implications from the work, and recommends next steps in moving forward.

Institutional review reports delivered to 15 University of North Carolina (UNC) and 15 independent college and university program leaders (NCICU) were designed to plot a pathway for improvement by identifying course or program strengths as well as the most significant aspects of a program's work where specific actions are needed to move it to the next level of quality. TPI-US conducted reviews of 122 courses across 30 public and private institutions.

Review findings and recommendations presented in this document provide the North Carolina General Assembly with insight into patterns and trends as well as strengths and weaknesses of the science of reading (SoR) coursework quality across the state. The 30 institutional reports transmitted separately to program leaders contain a description of the courses, the evidence used in the specific course review (e.g., ELEM 1234), reviewer-identified strengths, and recommendations for improving the course so that it embodies the SoR that North Carolina requires, thereby ensuring that candidates learn about the SoR and are prepared to teach it effectively.

In this summary report to the General Assembly, the review findings from the course-by-course evidence are organized by SoR concept because a particular concept like fluency or phonemic awareness may be embedded in more than one course. Each institution needs to sequence and spiral key SoR concepts within individual courses and across multiple reading courses to present and teach them well to effectively build teacher candidate knowledge and mastery so that teacher candidates teach reading effectively. Reviewers were trained to look for relevant SoR concept evidence and rate the accuracy and quality of these concepts in *every course*.

TPI-US teams reviewed 122 courses offered by 30 institutions by collecting and analyzing course syllabi and schedules, assignments, assessments, video observations of course instruction, and instructor interviews. Reviewers used the evidence from those sources to make informed judgments in line with the North Carolina Literacy Review Rubric. While most program leaders and faculty provided vital assistance to the review teams conducting this work, some offered minimal cooperation. As a result, there was little to no information about

some courses that should have been included in the review. For example, some faculty who are teaching relevant courses declined to make course session videos available or to be interviewed, and several program or institutional leaders withheld course materials and/or would not allow reviewers to view course videos and interview faculty. Despite those challenges, review teams were able to accumulate, analyze, and draw conclusions on a considerable body of evidence with direct relevance to how well North Carolina teacher candidates are prepared to advance the reading knowledge and skills of their students.

Key Findings and Recommendations for Actionable Next Steps

In addition to summarizing individual program reports providing evidence of key findings in each course, we also want to call attention to some overall findings that are intended to bolster the success of the state's SoR strategy.

<u>Course Content and Materials</u>

- Institutions should ensure that coursework spirals and is aligned to the competencies and sub-competencies in the North Carolina Literacy Review Rubric (concepts of print, oral language development, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing). Those competencies should be anchored to an SoR model such as the Simple View of Reading and Scarborough's Rope. Candidates taking literacy courses would benefit from consistent definitions of terms and assessments that could be referenced across courses, no matter the pathway. That is important because it would ensure all candidates are equally prepared to teach evidence-based reading instruction to the students they serve. Educator preparation programs (EPPs) rated as Good or Strong utilized high-quality, research-based definitions and materials steeped consistently in SoR strategies and made learning relevant and engaging to candidates. It is key for all institutions to have foundational course content and materials. This work should occur through faculty collaboration within programs and by program and institutional leaders holding faculty accountable for progress.
- EPP coursework should ensure that candidates are effectively prepared to assess and address students' diverse reading needs to include neurodiversity, English language learners, gifted and talented learners, and all diverse learners. Instructors and coursework should provide multiple models and opportunities for candidates to practice administering and analyzing various measures and assessments and how to use that data to guide planning and target instruction for students who need more intensive support. Coursework should address differentiating for all students in all aspects of literacy. Each program should revise course syllabi and materials, and faculty should engage in ongoing professional development to ensure they are using research-based assessments and differentiated instruction and bolster their teaching skills through models and resources that embed connections to practice within their coursework.
- Across the state, coursework and training revealed a gap in writing instruction and preparation. Candidates need preparation and practice to understand the recursive process between reading and writing; how writing develops; and how to break down writing into manageable parts, from planning and tools to using mentor texts to assist in writing instruction. That would provide candidates with in-depth knowledge of the content, process, and interwoven relationship between reading and writing, which will better equip them to ensure growth and success for the students they teach.

<u>Faculty SoR Knowledge and Teaching</u>

- Many SoR components are incorporated and taught in North Carolina educator preparation programs; however, many are taught in isolation under a balanced literacy construct. Each institution should emphasize improving faculty knowledge and course content to include a deeper depth of foundational content knowledge in characteristics of high-quality reading. For example, Scarborough's Rope, the

Simple View of Reading, Ehri's stages of word ready development, and the Four-Part Processing Model as the foundation for all components would strengthen candidates' ability to teach the pillars of literacy in a structured way. Bolstering faculty SoR knowledge and their teaching strategies and skills should happen relatively quickly, and faculty and leadership should ensure that is done well.

- While many EPPs offer literacy coursework in their elementary and special education programs, some of which overlap, there is variation in the explanation of the key pillars, for example, phonics. Some courses teach a systematic, synthetic approach, and others teach a self-paced, inquiry-based approach. Candidates taking literacy courses would benefit from consistent definitions of terms and assessments that could be referenced across courses, no matter the pathway. All faculty must work together to best prepare candidates for teaching P–12 students, and this collaboration would support the course sequencing and spiraling that are not evident in a number of programs. That is important because it would ensure all candidates are equally prepared to teach evidence-based reading instruction to the students they serve.

Course Sequencing and Connections

- Each institution should ensure that literacy courses are not taught in silos by taking steps to see that all literacy standards are mapped out and addressed across courses and that literacy coursework is planned and delivered as a well-thought-out **trajectory of courses** that build upon one another thoughtfully and intentionally. Taking those improvement steps successfully means that all literacy instructors should be included in this process to ensure consistency and that in-depth introduction, practice, and application levels are achieved.
- Many EPP courses demonstrated coursework-embedded connections to practice as a strength; however, this area also emerged as an area for improvement for many courses and instructors because their teacher candidates cannot learn how to apply their content knowledge in their classroom teaching without seeing it modeled and practiced within literacy courses. Candidates would benefit from seeing instructors explicitly model literacy concepts; having instructors step out to explain the link from modeling to classroom application; and utilizing in-class practice opportunities such as the gradual-release model, demonstration videos, practice opportunities, and peer teaching. Another key bridge from content acquisition to successful teaching practice is incorporating into these courses intentional assignments relevant to field-based work that are directly related to course content.

Other Comments for Consideration

Many institutional course reviews demonstrated that faculty and program leaders want to improve coursework that supports the SoR to positively impact candidates' ability to educate P–12 students and promote solid achievement outcomes. The commitment to and need for programs to act with a sense of urgency to address their shortcomings must lie at the core of a quest for improvement. To that end, understanding the external resources and expertise available to foster improvement will be a significant contributing factor for the public and independent colleges and universities to consider in moving forward.

In addition to the findings and recommendations noted above, review teams examining coursework and course materials across the 30 participating North Carolina EPPs noted several other areas where support for enhanced coursework, faculty teaching, or course delivery strategies would advance the reading improvement goals that the state of North Carolina seeks.

- Ensure that courses give deeper and more consistent attention to diverse learners' learning needs through research-based differentiated instruction, modeling its effective delivery in course instruction. Providing teacher candidates with high-quality supervised opportunities to practice differentiating their instruction

and receive accurate feedback on their practice is essential if every North Carolina child is to benefit from SoR-based teaching.

- Entirely online and asynchronous SoR courses, which some public institutions are utilizing, are a less-than-optimal course delivery mechanism for conveying complex, sequential, and inter-related topics *and* for building teacher candidate mastery. And because connections to practice in program coursework—helping candidates to understand how to apply what they are being taught in a course—is critical to successful teaching outcomes, most of the online or asynchronous courses analyzed in the review fell short in this area *almost by design*.
- The nature of this statewide literacy course review did not allow for collecting evidence about the clinical practice components of educator preparation programs—choice of placement schools, the SoR knowledge, and skills of classroom mentor teachers charged with helping to develop candidate teaching ability, or the quality of observation and feedback needed to build teaching capacity in novices. Those aspects of teacher preparation are essential complements to university program coursework; poor quality in those areas can undermine the impact of even the best program coursework and faculty teaching.

Conducting the Review

<u>The Charge to TPI-US</u>

The North Carolina General Assembly requested an independent report on the implementation of SoR coursework at EPPs through a baseline analysis of "current coursework in literacy training and intervention strategies and practices at educator preparation programs (EPPs)." That legislative request makes reference to the statutory requirement that EPPS must "provide training for elementary and special education general curriculum teachers that ensure that students receive instruction in early literacy intervention strategies and practices that are aligned with the Science of Reading and State and national reading standards" to incorporate these components:

- "Instruction in the teaching of reading, including a substantive understanding of reading as a process involving oral language, phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. Instruction shall include appropriate application of literacy interventions to ensure reading proficiency for all students.
- "Instruction in evidence-based assessment and diagnosis of specific areas of difficulty with reading development and of reading deficiencies.
- "Instruction in appropriate application of literacy interventions to ensure reading proficiency for all students."

The UNC System contracted with TPI-US to conduct this baseline assessment of relevant coursework. Fifteen public universities and 15 independent colleges and universities participated in this effort by sharing course materials, providing faculty teaching videos, and making faculty available for interviews about their SoR courses and instruction.

To design and conduct this baseline assessment of coursework content and quality, TPI-US worked closely with the UNC System, its 15 institutions providing teacher training in the SoR, and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU) and 15 of its member institutions. An expert review team that included literacy faculty from North Carolina public and private universities and national literacy experts convened to develop the North Carolina Literacy Review Rubric as a rubric for assessing evidence about course content and quality. Once the rubric was completed and approved for use, TPI-US trained a group of national literacy experts to apply the North Carolina Literacy Rubric in a reliable and valid way, similar to how TPI-US has conducted comprehensive EPP program reviews in more than 20 states over the past eight years.

TPI-US was contracted to transmit final literacy review reports to each of the 30 participating EPPs at the conclusion of their review. Standard TPI-US practice is to submit these individual reports in draft form, requesting programs to identify factual errors or unclear statements and then delivering the final reports to the institution after obtaining their factual feedback. TPI-US followed this process for the 30 North Carolina institutional reports.

In keeping with the legislative language, contract terms call for TPI-US to submit a report to the UNC System summarizing findings and recommendations for improvement across its 15 EPPs and to deliver a similar report to NCICU with summarized findings and improvement recommendations for its 15 participating college and university EPPs. TPI-US was also charged with preparing and submitting a single report that consolidated findings and improvement recommendations across all 30 institutions.

About TPI-US

Since 2013, TPI-US has been a reliable catalyst for EPP improvement across the country and has completed more than 250 program reviews in 22 states. Grounded in a philosophy of continuous improvement, TPI-US reviews teacher preparation programs to determine how programs can expand their promising practices and address areas of needed improvement and has shown repeated success in developing and implementing formative reviews and frameworks that produce reliable and valid information about teacher preparation programs. No other organization in the United States has the demonstrated capacity to organize and deliver the quantity or quality of inspections to move the needle on improving teacher preparation programs.

Methodology & Evidence Base for Analyses and Assessments

TPI-US worked in summer 2022 to develop and train on a review framework aligned with North Carolina state standards. The intention was to create a focused framework that included the SoR concepts expected to be embedded in program coursework and taught by faculty as well as the level of quality with which each program was implementing them. Literacy experts from private and public institutions and national literacy experts developed this framework and ensured it was aligned with North Carolina standards. A three-day training was developed and facilitated to train reviewers (also literacy experts) on the content of the framework, norming, and calibration practices, as well as the methodology of the TPI-US process. The framework covers nine areas of study. The nine areas of study include an overview of the science of reading, concepts of print instruction, oral language instruction, phonological and phonemic instruction, phonics instruction to include orthography and automatic word recognition, fluency instruction, vocabulary instruction, text comprehension instruction, and finally, writing instruction.

TPI-US coordinated schedules, logistics, and data requests with the independent colleges and university literacy programs chosen to participate in the review and with all fifteen UNC institutions. During this period, all parties held virtual meetings with leadership from NCICU and the University of North Carolina (UNC) system to ensure that all aspects of the framework and review methodology were known and understood by all parties to facilitate the successful completion of the reviews. Additional calls and conversations with programs took place throughout the review process to ensure that they fully understood the review process, what materials should be provided to the review teams, which videos of course sessions should be submitted, and which faculty members were to be interviewed. TPI-US provided multiple opportunities for programs to provide the necessary items to conduct a thorough review. Most programs provided requested course materials, instructional videos, and the opportunity to interview course instructors. All available and provided materials were included in the review.

Review teams met to summarize each program's key strengths and areas for improvement and provided that information in an institutional report. The totality of the evidence that reviewers—who are trained to use the North Carolina Literacy Review Rubric reliably and validly—collected, analyzed, and rated resulted in each program's overall evaluation.

Relevant Considerations & Observations

Teacher educators and education policy leaders across the country recognize there are important differences between the TPI-US approach to literacy coursework reviews and that of other organizations that may issue reports or publish ratings. The TPI-US methodology addresses course syllabi and related materials, paying attention to how well that material is conveyed to teacher candidates and how well they can apply their SoR knowledge and skills in the K–12 classroom. What may look strong on paper could be undermined by how faculty implement and teach it, the level of attention the college instructors give to helping candidates understand how to apply what they are learning, and whether future teachers understand the information well enough to use it effectively in their own classroom.

Those important quality considerations led TPI-US to request course videos from the college or university instructors whose coursework was included in this review. TPI-US teams also sought opportunities to interview the instructors about their courses and the observed class session. The time and resources available for the North Carolina literacy coursework review meant that TPI-US was unable to gather evidence about other vital components of literacy-focused educator preparation in North Carolina that would shed further light on how well programs are implementing the SoR across the state. These program components include:
- Observation of candidates teaching in their clinical placements as well as direct observation of the feedback these candidates receive from program field supervisors and classroom mentors to understand how well teacher candidates have learned and can apply SoR knowledge in their own classroom teaching.
- The extent to which preparation programs collect and use high-quality information from candidate academic and clinical experiences to gauge their own program's strengths and weaknesses and how effectively program leaders and faculty act on this information to foster ongoing continuous improvement.

A comprehensive review of programs to assess how well they prepare candidates to teach the Science of Reading effectively will certainly add detail to recommendations for improvement. Current time and resource constraints on the overall review process did not enable TPI-US to consider evidence from the clinical practice components described above. Moreover, limited cooperation from some program faculty and leaders who were unwilling to share relevant course materials with review teams left TPI-US with incomplete information with which to assess their programs.

Full TPI-US reviews include interviews with an extensive set of stakeholders (teacher candidates, recent graduates, school principals from placement schools and those hiring program graduates, classroom mentors, program faculty, and district administrators) as well as analysis of key data on candidate academic and clinical performance; completion and employment rates; survey feedback from graduates and their employers; and the impact of graduates on student learning.

This additional evidence—part of the typical TPI-US review of educator preparation programs—would be useful for determining how well North Carolina teacher candidates are able to apply their SoR knowledge and skills in classrooms across the state where, according to the 2019 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report, 36 percent of North Carolina fourth graders are proficient in reading and 33 percent score below the Basic level. Performance for non-white and economically disadvantaged fourth graders in North Carolina is well below

that for all students. While fourth graders' performance on the 2022 NAEP reading assessment declined from the 2019 results, it seems highly likely that schooling and other disruptions associated with the worldwide pandemic played a role.

Another relevant factor in considering the next steps for improving SoR teaching and learning within North Carolina EPPs is the varying level of cooperation that program leaders and faculty gave to the baseline SoR review. That is addressed in this report's executive summary and noted in the individual institutional reports. Had these programs cooperated more fully, review teams would have produced a fuller picture of how well SoR concepts are embedded in their coursework and conveyed to teacher candidates. For those programs in both public and independent sectors that gave limited cooperation, trained review teams applied the North Carolina Literacy Review Rubric accurately and made carefully considered assessments of the evidence that was provided just as they did for programs that participated in the spirit of full cooperation.

Summary of the Findings - Overall Program Distribution Score:

Overall Program Score

Strong 6.7%
Inadequate 6.7%
Good 23.3%
Needs Improve… 63.3%
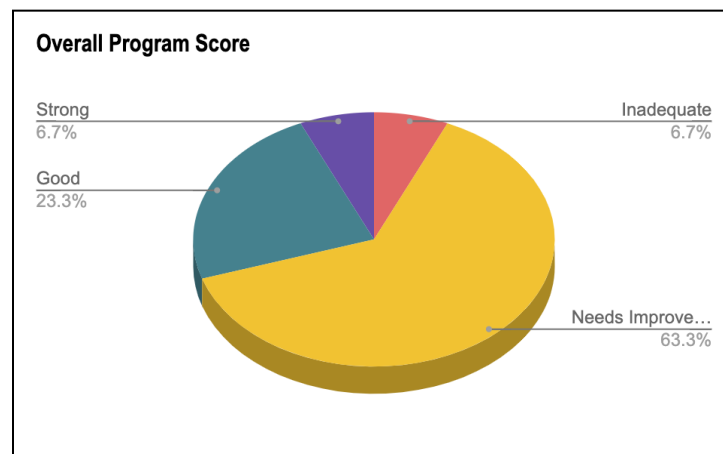
N=30: Inadequate, 2 institutions; Needs Improvement, 19 institutions;
Good, 7 institutions; Strong, 2 institution

Reviewers found that the overall program scores were Good or Strong for nine of the 30 programs because the SoR components were woven into all or most courses consistently across programs to ensure candidates were able to understand their implications to student learning. For 21 programs, significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply the SoR concepts in their program. These programs may have some of the components of the SoR, but they are not yet being taught consistently across all courses in all programs or reflected in course materials and syllabi.

Summary of the Findings for Each Area of Study:

Domain 1: Overview of the Science of Reading: This area of study focuses on how well the program defines and outlines coursework and assignments to support the SoR competencies. The review area approaches reading research foundational principles, making connections between evidence-based knowledge and application to support learners. It is important for programs to demonstrate evidence indicating reading research content knowledge is taught in an explicit manner so that candidates can complete the program with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective educators in all areas of reading research instruction.

Reviewers found that these course content, instruction, and associated materials in SoR instruction were Good or Strong for 12 of 30 programs because the SoR components—such as Ehri's stages of word reading development, Scarborough's rope, and the Simple View of Reading—were woven into all or most courses to ensure candidates were able to understand their implications to student learning. For 18 programs, significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply the SoR concepts in their classroom teaching.

Overview of the Science of Reading

Strong 13.3%
Inadequate 13.3%
Good 26.7%
Needs Improvement 46.7%
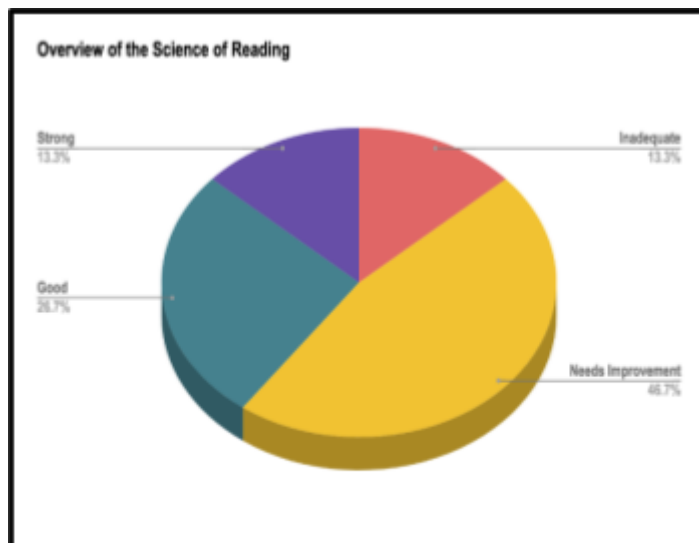
N=30: Inadequate, 4 institutions; Needs Improvement, 14 institutions; Good, 8 institutions; Strong, 4 institutions

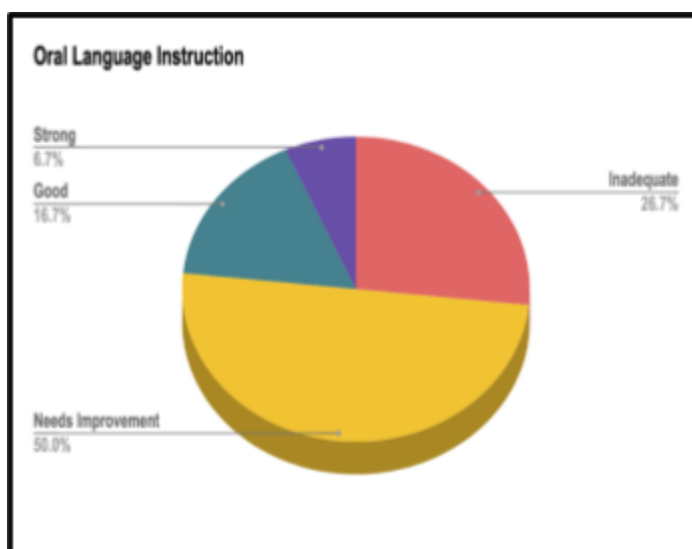| Example of course strength:	Example of course in need of improvement:
This course structure rigorously addresses all literacy components that align with the North Carolina Literacy Review Rubric and SoR research. The instructor models structured teaching of reading that is explicit, sequential, and engaging with scaffolding on the components of phonemic awareness, phonics, orthography, word recognition, fluency, and written expression. Candidates are required to administer assessments and participate in data meetings to plan and deliver 10–14 structured literacy lessons. The instructor observes lessons and engages candidates in a cycle of good-quality ongoing feedback and reflection. Those courses provide a clear coherence between research, knowledge, skills, practice, and candidates' pedagogy. They should serve as a model for all faculty to emulate.	The course does not provide candidates with adequate knowledge, understanding, or practice to develop and deliver explicit, systematic, and sequential instruction within a structured literacy lesson. The course should begin by developing a systematic, sequential, and explicit process to teach the components of reading and language structures. Instructors should provide consistent modeling, videos, and opportunities for candidates to practice peer-to-peer review, along with providing candidates with good examples of structured literacy lesson plans.

Domain 2: Concepts of Print Instruction: This area of study focuses on how well the program defines and outlines coursework and assignments to support the competencies of concepts of print. The review area approaches concepts of print in both reading and writing, making connections between evidence-based knowledge, application, and assessment to support a diverse population of learners. It is important for programs to demonstrate evidence indicating that concepts of print content knowledge are taught in an explicit manner so that candidates can complete the program with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective educators in all areas of concepts of print instruction.

Reviewers found that course content, instruction, and associated materials in concepts of print instruction were Good or Strong for 12 of 30 programs because courses mostly or always covered content thoroughly, provided multiple opportunities for candidates to practice and apply content, and discussed how to assess concepts of print instruction. For 18 programs, significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply concepts of print in their classroom teaching.

Concepts of Print Instruction

Strong 10.0%
Inadequate 16.7%
Good 30.0%
Needs Improvement 43.3%
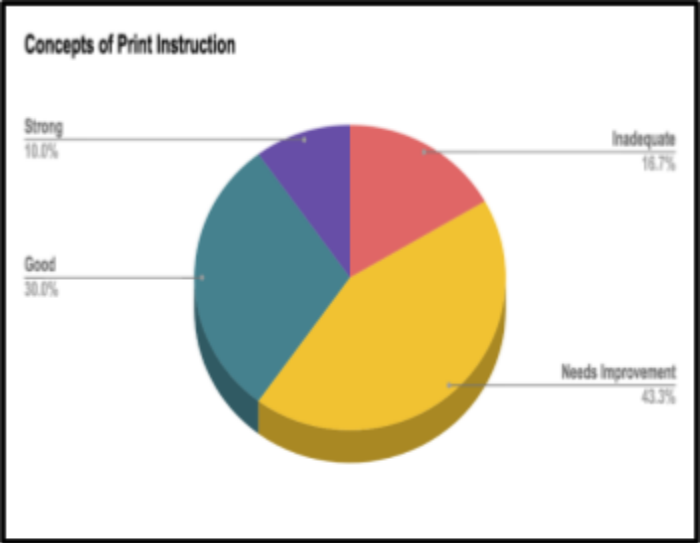
N=30: Inadequate, 5 institutions; Needs Improvement, 13 institutions; Good, 9 institutions; Strong, 3 institutions

Example of course strength:	Example of course in need of improvement:
This course provides instruction in book concepts and print concepts as well as letter formation. This course emphasizes and models shared reading and the importance of creating a print-rich environment. There are clear opportunities for candidates to practice assessing students' understanding of concepts of print.	Candidates receive knowledge and terminology to define print concepts; however, there is no evidence of opportunities for candidates to identify and explicitly plan, model, or teach book and print concepts. The curriculum needs to include how print and book concepts vary across languages and cultures and how to use assessment of print concepts and student backgrounds to guide and differentiate instruction. Programs should provide opportunities for candidates to plan, model, or teach book and print concepts that support the transfer of knowledge and skills to pedagogy and practice.

Domain 3: Oral Language Instruction: This area of study focuses on how well the program defines and outlines coursework and assignments to support the competencies of oral language. The area of study approaches oral language in all aspects of literacy as an evolving concept, making connections between evidence-based knowledge, application, and assessment to support connections between language structures (phonology, morphology, semantics, syntax, pragmatics and discourse, orthography) and literacy components (phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, text comprehension, and writing) across a diverse population of learners. It is important for the program to demonstrate evidence indicating that oral language content knowledge is taught in an explicit manner so that candidates can complete the program with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective educators in all areas of oral language instruction.

Reviewers found that oral language instruction was Good or Strong for seven of 30 programs because the course content mostly or always addressed language structures and literacy components, including assessment, application, and instructor modeling of these structures and components. For 23 programs, significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply knowledge of oral language instruction in their classroom teaching. Given the widespread need for improvement within and across courses and institutions, this may be one of the areas in which a multi-institutional community of practice or similar strategy would be helpful to strengthen coursework and training in these essential areas of the SoR.

Oral Language Instruction

Strong 6.7%
Good 16.7%
Inadequate 26.7%
Needs Improvement 50.0%

N=30: Inadequate, 8 institutions; Needs Improvement, 15 institutions; Good, 5 institutions; Strong, 2 institutions

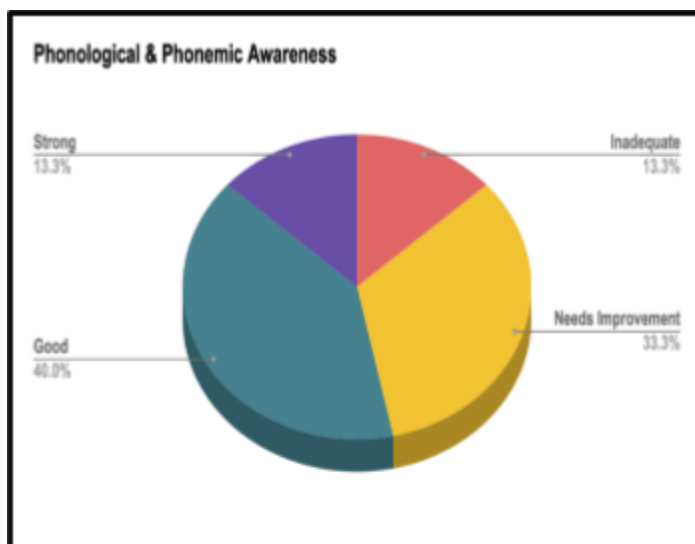| **Example of course strength:**	**Example of course in need of improvement:**
This course approaches assessment for oral language from different angles, one being the measurement of skills through observation of language development and facilitation of conversations, while the other is evaluating the impact of oral language on other skills assessments. This multifaceted approach deepens candidates' understanding of the interwoven relationship among skills and how those relationships connect to assessment. A major strength of the course is the ongoing support and feedback provided throughout the learning cycle of observing, practicing, administering, and analyzing.	The program course needs to include additional information about the reciprocal relationship between oral language and all literacy components. Candidates should have multiple opportunities to observe examples of facilitating engaging conversations (e.g., faculty modeling, demonstration videos, fieldwork) and to evaluate all language structures through assignments such as case studies and scenarios. Additionally, candidates should have structured opportunities that deepen their understanding of language diversity and instruction that meets diverse learners' needs.

Domain 4: Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Instruction: This area of study focuses on how well the program defines and outlines coursework and assignments to support the competencies of phonological and phonemic awareness. The area of study approaches phonological and phonemic awareness in all aspects of literacy as an evolving concept making connections between evidence-based knowledge, application, and assessment to support the manipulation of phonemes leading to proficient and automatic word recognition across a diverse population of learners. The program needs to demonstrate evidence indicating that phonological and phonemic awareness content knowledge is taught in an explicit manner so that candidates can complete the program with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective educators in all areas of phonological and phonemic awareness instruction.

Reviewers found that instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness was Good or Strong for 16 of 30 programs because course content mostly or always delivers content in an explicit, systematic, and sequential manner to ensure candidates are able to understand the foundational and appropriate phonological and phonemic awareness development of the students they teach. For 14 programs, significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply phonological and phonemic awareness in their classroom teaching.

Phonological & Phonemic Awareness

Strong 13.3%
Inadequate 13.3%
Needs Improvement 33.3%
Good 40.0%

N=30: Inadequate, 4 institutions; Needs Improvement, 10 institutions; Good, 12 institutions; Strong. 4 institutions

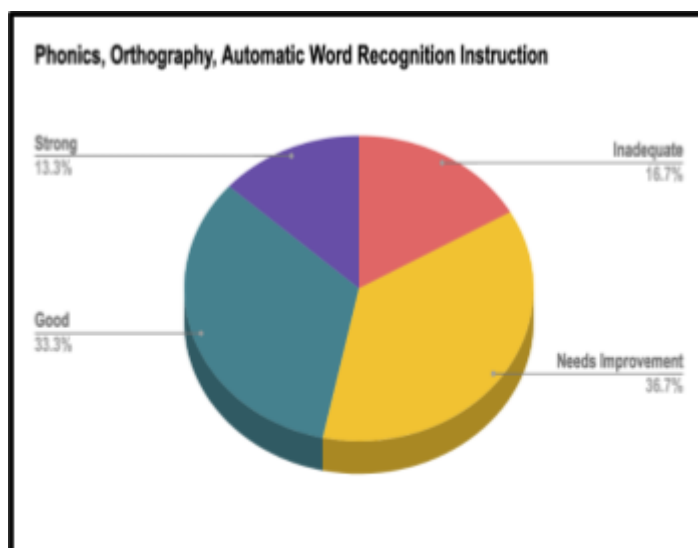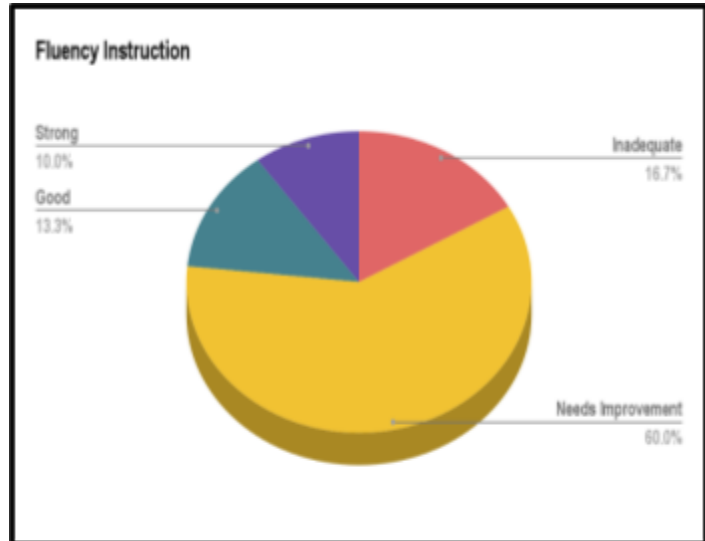| Example of course strength:	Example of course in need of improvement:
Candidates consistently receive the knowledge, skills, and terminology related to instruction in phonological and phonemic awareness as they contribute to decoding and encoding. Candidates practiced phonemic awareness skills associated with isolating, blending, segmenting, adding, deleting, and substituting as they answered questions through the "word ladder" activity in class. The instructor does phoneme-grapheme checks at two points during this course. Candidates are also asked to answer a discussion board question where they differentiate between phonological and phonemic awareness. Candidates are explicitly taught the three stages of word reading development (early, beginning, and advanced phonemic awareness).	There was a pattern of inconsistencies and misinformation in relation to the instructional strategies modeled for the skills. Some examples include segmentation of syllables being presented as the six syllable types (i.e., a phonics skill), misidentification of phoneme segmentation as phoneme isolation, and statements such as the "silent e" making words harder to segment (when really children don't need to know the silent e to segment phonemes). Candidates should assess and analyze articulation of all 44 English phonemes for their continuum of difficulty in phonemic awareness tasks; teaching demonstrations and modeled lessons should provide candidates with a deeper understanding of how to teach and differentiate the targeted skills; and instructors should evaluate and provide candidates with feedback on their ability to use assessment data to plan full phonological/phonemic awareness lessons as well as their ability to deliver explicit phonological/phonemic awareness lessons.

Domain 5: Phonics, Orthography, Automatic Word Recognition Instruction: This area of study focuses on how well the program defines and outlines coursework and assignments to support SOR and structured literacy instruction to include content, knowledge, and application of data-driven instruction when teaching phonics, orthography, and automatic word recognition. It is important for the program to demonstrate evidence and the order that the content will be delivered to ensure the program provides content knowledge and key teaching methods and skills for candidates to be effective educators in all areas of phonics, orthography, and automatic word recognition. The specific criteria set forth in the framework are included as core, research-based components of developing children's literacy within a diverse population of learners.

Review teams found that instruction in phonics, orthography, and automatic word recognition was Good or Strong for 14 of 30 programs because course content mostly or always delivers content in an explicit, systematic, and sequential manner to ensure candidates are able to understand the foundational and appropriate phonics development of the students they teach. For 16 programs, significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply these SoR components in their classroom teaching.

Phonics, Orthography, Automatic Word Recognition Instruction

Strong 13.3%
Inadequate 16.7%
Good 33.3%
Needs Improvement 36.7%

N=30: Inadequate, 5 institutions; Needs Improvement, 11 institutions; Good, 10 institutions; Strong, 4 institutions

| Example of course strength:	Example of course in need of improvement:
The course provides a solid foundation in the developmental continuum of word reading skills and provides multiple exposures to orthographic patterns, common morphemes, and strategies for teaching those items to intermediate grades. The course provides good exposure to data analysis with candidates analyzing data sets (e.g., spelling inventories, running records) and using the results to make instructional decisions that are reflective of the SoR. Additionally, the course provides a strong experience of instructing diverse learners. These experiences include instructor modeling and course activities addressing how to scaffold phonics instruction for a variety of needs.	There was a pattern of inconsistencies and misinformation in relation to the instructional strategies modeled for the skills. Some examples include segmentation of syllables being presented as the six syllable types (i.e., a phonics skill), misidentification of phoneme segmentation as phoneme isolation, and statements such as the "silent e" making words harder to segment (when really children don't need to know the silent e to segment phonemes). Candidates should assess and analyze articulation of all 44 English phonemes for their continuum of difficulty in phonemic awareness tasks; teaching demonstrations and modeled lessons should provide candidates with a deeper understanding of how to teach and differentiate the targeted skills; and instructors should evaluate and provide feedback to candidates on their ability to use assessment data to plan full phonological/phonic awareness lessons as well as their ability to deliver explicit phonological/phonemic awareness lessons.

Domain 6: Fluency Instruction: This area of study focuses on how well the program defines and outlines coursework and assignments to support the competencies of oral reading fluency. The area of study approaches fluency in all aspects of literacy as an evolving concept making connections between evidence-based knowledge, application, and assessment to support fluency and comprehension across a diverse population of learners. It is important that the program provides content knowledge and key teaching methods and skills for candidates to be effective educators in all areas of fluency instruction.

Review teams found that fluency instruction was Good or Strong for seven of 30 programs because course content consistently addressed all areas of fluency, assessment of fluency, opportunities to practice and apply instructor modeling, and attention to diverse learners related to fluency. For 23 programs, significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply SoR-consistent knowledge of fluency instruction in their classroom teaching.


Fluency Instruction

Strong 10.0%
Good 13.3%
Inadequate 16.7%
Needs Improvement 60.0%

N=30: Inadequate, 5 institutions; Needs Improvement, 18 institutions; Good, 4 institutions; Strong, 3 institutions

Example of course strength:	**Example of course in need of improvement:**
Instruction and training consistently use multiple opportunities to define and apply the relationships of rate and prosody; fluency at the word level; how fluency impacts comprehension; the relationships between accuracy and decoding; as well as automaticity at the grapheme, phoneme, syllable, phrase, and sentence level are important to build fluency within the connected text. The course observation indicates the candidates are consistently engaged in activities to deepen their knowledge, and the instructor uses varied levels of questioning to check for candidates' understanding. Candidates analyze completed assessments and have opportunities to administer these assessments to design instruction through a case study.	The course largely focuses on accuracy, with less attention given to prosody and appropriate reading rate. Second, it does not teach or practice a fluency rubric. Instead, candidates are prompted with reflective prompts such as "I notice," leaving room for inconsistent observations. Finally, candidates are not required to plan and teach a fluency lesson but instead may choose to teach lessons as part of their 10-lesson requirement. To improve, candidates should be trained in using a reliable and valid method of assessing oral reading fluency such as a rubric. The program should provide in-class practice with additional opportunities to use the rubric in their field placements. Additionally, the program should require candidates to address fluency in their planned lessons and to reflect upon the effectiveness of those lessons. Additionally, the program should make specific connections to linguistically diverse students and to students identified with dyslexia and other reading difficulties.

Domain 7: Vocabulary Instruction: This area of study focuses on how well the program defines and outlines coursework and assignments to support the competencies of vocabulary. The area of study approaches vocabulary in all aspects of literacy as an evolving concept, making connections between evidence-based knowledge, application, and assessment to support explicit vocabulary instruction across a diverse population of learners. It is important for the program to provide explicit and systematic vocabulary content to ensure knowledge and key teaching methods and skills are effective for future educators.

Vocabulary instruction was Good or Strong for nine of 30 programs because course content consistently addresses the different aspects and tiers of vocabulary, assessment of vocabulary, instructor modeling, and attention to diverse learners. Vocabulary instruction for 21 programs calls for significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply SoR-consistent knowledge of vocabulary instruction in their classroom teaching.

Vocabulary Instruction

- Strong 6.7%
- Good 23.3%
- Inadequate 13.3%
- Needs Improvement 56.7%
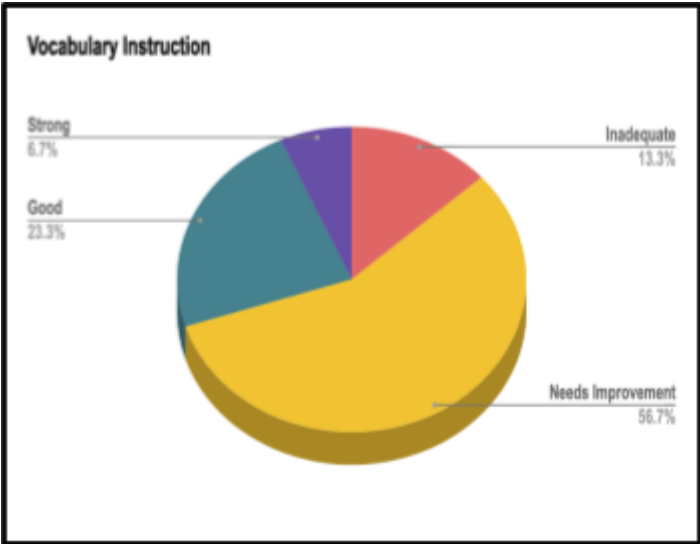
N=30: Inadequate, 4 institutions; Needs Improvement, 17 institutions; Good, 7 institutions; Strong, 2 institutions

Example of course strength:	Example of course in need of improvement:
The teaching of vocabulary from models that support read-aloud structures to morphemic analysis/meaningful word parts provide varied research-based resources supporting comprehension through vocabulary development. Candidates have the opportunity to view videos, see models of vocabulary instruction, and practice with peers so they have a common understanding of the need to provide multiple opportunities for vocabulary development to support the acquisition of language at various learning stages. Candidates discuss and practice assessment with opportunities to discuss the next steps for instruction.	The course needs to provide more opportunities for candidates to explore evidence-based instruction incorporating vocabulary within all components of literacy instruction through consistent and pervasive modeling to instill the importance of vocabulary all day every day by playing with language to explore a deeper understanding of the role of syntax and pragmatics on literacy development. The program should provide models of vocabulary instruction not only through oral language but as the candidate teaches phonics, using words in sentences with students reciprocating, and active engagement of new vocabulary throughout lessons. It can accomplish that by sharing a few evidence-based vocabulary models of instruction with teaching methods courses and possibly providing an extension to this course to address a comprehensive understanding of diversity to support language acquisition. Additionally, the program should make specific connections to linguistically diverse students and to students identified with dyslexia and other reading difficulties.

Domain 8: Text Comprehension Instruction: This area of study focuses on how well the program defines and outlines coursework and assignments to support the competencies of listening and reading comprehension. The area of study approaches text comprehension in all aspects of literacy as an evolving concept, making connections between evidence-based knowledge, application, and assessment-proficient word reading and addressing background knowledge activation, vocabulary, awareness of sentence sense, text structure, inference making, metacognition, strategies for comprehending to motivate learners, the use of scenarios, peer teaching, field work, and/or demonstration videos to connect content to classroom practice to support a diverse population of learners. It is important for the program to demonstrate evidence indicating that comprehension content knowledge is taught in an explicit manner so that candidates can complete the program with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective educators in all areas of listening and reading comprehension instruction.

Course review teams reported that text comprehension instruction was Good or Strong for 11 of 30 programs because course content consistently addresses comprehension components and instructional strategies, provides candidates with the opportunities to practice and apply, and includes instructor modeling to ensure candidates are prepared to develop comprehension and understanding for the students they teach. Significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed in 19 programs to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply SoR-consistent knowledge of fluency instruction in text comprehension knowledge and strategies in their classroom teaching.
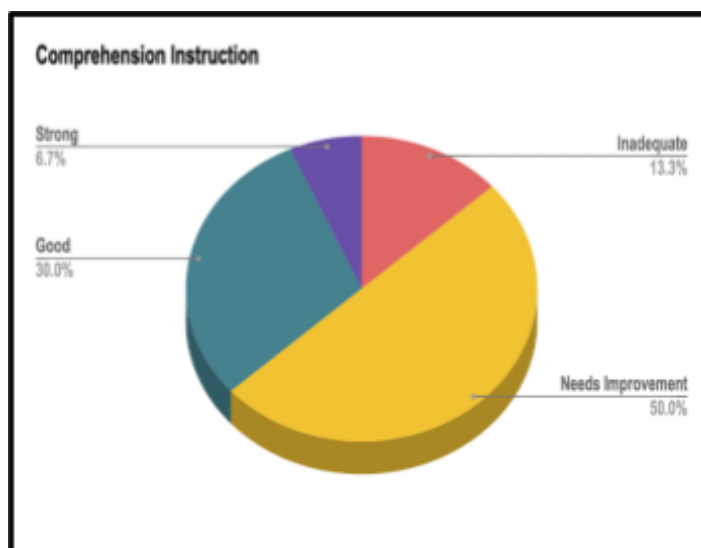
Comprehension Instruction

Strong 6.7% | Inadequate 13.3% | Good 30.0% | Needs Improvement 50.0%

N=30: Inadequate, 4 institutions; Needs Improvement, 15 institutions; Good, 9 institutions; Strong, 2 institutions

Example of course strength:
This course provides a complete picture of comprehension instruction while breaking its complexity into smaller, understandable chunks,. Candidates learn and practice a wide variety of topics such as types of questions and think-alouds to model a variety of skills (e.g., inferencing, self-monitoring of comprehension). Candidates are able to see examples of comprehension instruction (e.g., class observations, instructor demonstrations, videos) and have opportunities to practice using and teaching comprehension skills (e.g., peer teach, recorded lesson enactments, classroom teach). Continuous growth is embedded into the course because the instructor provides immediate feedback on pre- and post-lesson plans and for the recorded lesson enactments, giving candidates more opportunity to grow as teachers of scientifically based reading instruction. The course makes connections to linguistically diverse students, such as strong connections during the teaching demonstrations by providing examples of cognates and how to support linguistically diverse students in the classroom.

Example of course in need of improvement:
The program could strengthen the course by intentionally spiraling back to scientifically based reading models such as Scarborough's Rope to explain why individual difficulties/differences in comprehension may occur across children, offering teaching demonstrations that model how to teach all comprehension skills with direct connections to differentiating that instruction and by offering additional connections to cultural relevancy such as how text structures vary across cultures and the difference between created texts and authentic texts. Additional ways to strengthen the course are by ensuring that all candidates plan a full comprehension lesson instead of selecting among various topics (e.g., vocabulary, fluency, comprehension) and by increasing the fidelity of course assignments by using a retelling rubric for the "retelling assignment" and an observation evaluation form to evaluate lessons performed in the field.

Domain 9: Writing Instruction: It is essential for candidates to learn deeply about and apply the components of written expression. Coursework should prepare candidates to explicitly and systematically develop learners' basic writing skills to prevent writing difficulties and to increase writing motivation. Assessing a student's writing strengths and weaknesses leads to effective, targeted, and informed interventions. Assessing a student's writing strengths and weaknesses leads to effective, targeted, and informed interventions.

Review teams found writing instruction to be Good or Strong for six of 30 programs because course content consistently taught the developmental process for teaching writing and how to assess writing, provided opportunities for candidates to practice and apply, and included instructor modeling to further demonstrate classroom application. Significant course content and/or faculty teaching improvements are needed in 24 programs to ensure that candidates are well-prepared to understand and apply SoR-consistent knowledge of writing instruction in their classroom teaching.

Writing Instruction

Strong 6.7%
Good 13.3%
Inadequate 40.0%
Needs Improvement 40.0%
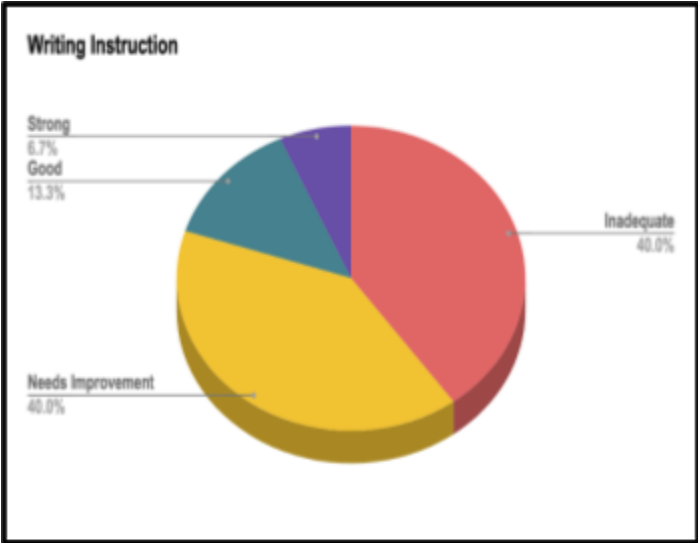
N=30: Inadequate, 12 institutions; Needs Improvement, 12 institutions; Good, 4 institutions; Strong, 2 institutions

Example of course strength:
This is a writing-focused course that notes how writing is connected to all other areas of literacy and shares the reciprocal benefits of reading and writing. The instructor models the development of writing skills from letter formation and drawing to advanced sentence formation to share stories, communicate for different purposes, and as a recursive process, and candidates practice and teach that throughout this course. The video observation of this course specifically focused on combining sentences and the difference between simple, compound, and complex sentences and how to help students progress in their writing based on where they currently are. The instructor explicitly teaches and models where to intervene, and candidates use peer-to-peer teaching to practice this skill. Candidate teach and execute the use of CBM assessments to screen and monitor students' writing mechanics, fluency, and expression in the field during this course. Direct instruction and modeling in the course provide candidates with opportunities to practice making instructional decisions based on collected assessments.

Example of course in need of improvement:
Coursework and training should include the recursive process between reading and writing; how writing occurs across the curriculum; how writing develops; best practices in writing instruction and how to break down writing into manageable parts from planning and tools to using mentor texts to assist in writing instruction. That would provide candidates with in-depth knowledge of the content, process, and interwoven relationship between reading and writing that will equip them to ensure student growth and success.