

The California State University

# Preparing Teachers to Teach Reading Effectively




Office of the Chancellor • 401 Golden Shore • Long Beach, CA • 90802-4210





## INTRODUCTION



*Reading is essential to success in the complex world of today and tomorrow. The ability to read is highly valued and it is important for personal, social, and economic well-being. A literate populace is fundamental to preserving our democratic, pluralistic society. Knowledgeable teachers who provide quality instruction are crucial to helping children and adolescents become successful readers, and these teachers must be available to all students in California.*

*At the California State University, the largest university system in the world, teacher preparation is a primary mission. Teacher education faculty at 22 campuses, most of whom are former elementary or secondary school teachers and hold advanced degrees, annually prepare the majority of California's new teachers for grades K-12. In addition, the California State University provides advanced graduate preparation in reading for experienced teachers; many campuses offer state-approved Reading Certificate and/or Reading/Language Arts Specialist Credential programs, in addition to master's degrees in reading and language arts. In these graduate programs, teachers develop expertise in teaching reading while they develop the skills to assume leadership positions in literacy in their schools and districts.*

*The purpose of this publication is to share information about how the CSU prepares teachers to provide reading instruction to California's children and adolescents. Becoming an expert teacher of reading is a career-long endeavor. During the initial preparation period at the university, teacher candidates become knowledgeable about research and theory regarding how individuals learn to read; lesson planning and delivery; curriculum and instructional materials; how to assess students' reading development and proficiency; how to provide appropriate literacy instruction based on assessed needs; and how to evaluate the effectiveness of their teaching.*

**T**he CSU reading faculty plays a vital role in initial and advanced teacher preparation. Our partners in this process include practicing teachers, district administrators, curriculum specialists, county offices of education, the California State Board of Education, the California Department of Education, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, and professional organizations. All help to initiate new teachers into the profession and work to further their development. For example, while the CSU provides the theoretical, research-based, and practical foundations for teaching reading, our district partners work with us to further prepare teachers to use state-adopted materials and programs and familiarize them with the culture of the students and community.

This publication is organized into three parts. First, the principles that guide reading instruction in the CSU are addressed. Second, the elements of comprehensive reading instruction are identified, and finally the CSU reading faculty are portrayed.

## **Fundamental Principles that Guide Reading Instruction in the CSU**

The following principles are embraced by the CSU reading faculty, and they serve as underpinnings for our teacher preparation courses and advanced studies in reading. These principles are grounded in reading research, theory, and practice. These same principles serve as a foundation for the *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools*, the *English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools*, Standards 7a and 7b from the *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for the Accreditation of Professional Teacher Preparation Programs*, and for the Reading Certificate and Reading/Language Arts Specialist Credential programs offered at many campuses of the California State University.

### ***The Teaching of Reading Is Knowledge-Based***

Although teaching is an art, it is also a science. Within the last several decades, great strides have been made in understanding how individuals learn to read. For instance, we know that students need ample opportunities to practice the skills and strategies they are learning with a variety of texts and genres. We know that comprehension instruction should include attention to vocabulary development, background knowledge, text structures, and thinking strategies. CSU teacher candidates acquire this knowledge base during their preparation program and they are given frequent opportunities to apply this knowledge in classrooms.

## ***Reading Is a Complex Process***

Reading is a complex cognitive and linguistic process. It involves decoding alphabetic symbols, drawing upon experiences and language, and using strategies effectively to make meaning. Successful reading depends upon having available a repertoire of decoding and comprehension skills and strategies. It depends upon the richness of a learner's experiences and language, both in the world and with print. It also depends upon a reader's view of reading as a purposeful, informative, and enjoyable activity. CSU teacher candidates learn that reading is a multi-dimensional act; to teach only phonemic awareness, for instance, would be to ignore other critical components of the decoding process that contribute to successful reading. Likewise, to teach students only to locate the main idea in a passage would be to disregard other critical aspects of comprehension. New teachers have acquired a fundamental understanding of the complexity of reading. As they continue their professional development, they become increasingly aware of all of the dynamics of teaching this complex process.

*New teachers have acquired a fundamental understanding of the complexity of reading. As they continue their professional development, they become increasingly aware of all of the dynamics of teaching this complex process.*

## ***Learners Are Different***

Students have diverse talents, strengths, interests, and experiences. Further, they have different language and cultural backgrounds. These variations influence the instructional decisions that teachers make. To ensure access, equity, and opportunities for all children to become readers and achieve their full potential, CSU teacher candidates learn to respect and respond to individual differences while understanding commonalities and maintaining high standards for all. They learn to observe and assess children's reading, writing, and spelling development. They learn to plan and teach lessons that address the needs of each student by using appropriate instructional approaches and materials. They plan quality reading instruction by drawing on the knowledge base of how children learn to read, grade-level expectations, and the fundamentals of effective reading instruction.



## ***Teachers Are Informed Decision-Makers***

Teachers make hundreds of instructional decisions every day. In order to make informed decisions that positively affect students' reading achievement, teachers must be knowledgeable about the reading process, effective instruction, the diversity of the communities they serve, and the expectations of teaching reading as outlined in state curriculum documents including the *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools*, and the *English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools*. Teachers must use this knowledge to plan effective reading lessons and to select and use instructional materials purposefully, thoughtfully, and reflectively. Teachers must use this knowledge to monitor the progress of each student, to take advantage of opportune moments to reinforce concepts or introduce new concepts, and to make decisions about appropriate interventions needed. Thus, the CSU reading faculty strongly believe that our role in preparing teachers involves educating individuals who can draw on their knowledge base and experiences to make informed critical decisions that positively influence the lives of children and adolescents. Education involves more than training teacher candidates to use particular approaches, methods, and materials.

## **Elements of Comprehensive Reading Instruction**

CSU reading professors ensure that teacher candidates become effective teachers for all students, including English learners and students with special needs, by providing instruction and public school classroom experiences that address the following broad categories: research and theory, learners, and curriculum and assessment.

### ***Research and Theory***

- **The Reading Process:** Candidates study and demonstrate understanding of historical perspectives, current and classic research studies, and theories that address the nature and processes of reading acquisition and development; the linguistic, sociological, cultural, cognitive, and psychological bases of the reading process; and the interrelatedness of reading, writing, listening, and speaking.
- **Effective Teaching Practices:** Candidates study and demonstrate understanding of historical and current research studies that address effective teaching practices in reading and language arts.
- **Language:** Candidates study and demonstrate understanding of the relationship of linguistics (phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax) to the reading process; first and second language acquisition, and oral language development; and how to teach reading and language arts to linguistically diverse students, many of whom have a home language other than English.



- **Classroom Applications of Theory and Research:** Candidates apply what they have learned from theory and research by working with children and adolescents in public school settings under the supervision of Master Teachers and university faculty; and they reflect on their own teaching practices as well as those they observe.

### Learners

- **The Role of Family, Culture, and Community:** Candidates learn that family, culture, and community greatly influence students' literacy development and use this knowledge to plan and teach effective lessons that honor and capitalize on students' diverse backgrounds.
- **Personal Factors that Impact Reading Development:** Candidates learn about the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual factors that influence students' literacy development and use this information to plan and teach effective lessons that take into consideration the individual needs of learners.
- **The Role of Motivation:** Candidates learn about the powerful role that motivation plays in achievement, and study and demonstrate understanding of ways to stimulate and nurture a lifelong interest in reading.

### Curriculum and Assessment

- **Word Recognition Instruction:** Candidates study and demonstrate understanding of the critical role of word recognition in reading and how to assess and explicitly teach its various components including phonemic awareness, phonics, the alphabetic principle, word identification strategies, spelling, orthographic knowledge, and structural analysis. Candidates also learn how to support readers as they apply these skills in a variety of reading situations.
- **Fluency:** Candidates learn about the importance of fluent reading, the relationship of fluency to comprehension, how to assess fluency, and ways to develop readers' fluency (such as rereading familiar books and choral reading).
- **Comprehension Instruction:** Candidates learn that comprehension is the goal of reading; and they study and demonstrate understanding of how to assess, explicitly teach, and model its various components including the flexible use of reading strategies (such as predicting, inferring, summarizing, and self-questioning), comprehension skills (such as comparing and contrasting, drawing conclusions, and finding the main idea), comprehension monitoring, text structures, and genres. Candidates also learn how to support readers' application of these strategies and skills with a variety of reading materials in a variety of reading situations.

- **Vocabulary Instruction:** Candidates learn about the importance of well-developed vocabulary, its role in comprehension, how to assess vocabulary, and how to teach vocabulary both explicitly through word study, and indirectly through the use of wide reading, rich oral language interactions, and context.
- **Literature and Other Texts:** Candidates learn to select and appropriately use different texts (including narrative text, expository text, poetic text, predictable text, and decodable text) for different purposes based upon students' needs and lesson objectives; and they learn to encourage and assess readers' responses to literature, engage readers in literary analysis, and use instructional approaches such as literature circles and reader's workshop. In addition, candidates learn to assist students to analyze, synthesize, and evaluate critically informational text.
- **Independent Reading:** Candidates learn the importance of providing opportunities for students to engage in daily reading of extended text for authentic purposes and how to promote and model reading as a pleasurable and beneficial activity.
- **Classroom Assessments that Inform Teaching:** Candidates learn to administer and interpret the results of a variety of informal and formal assessment instruments, both criterion referenced and norm referenced, that relate to reading and language arts and to plan instruction based upon assessment findings.
- **Documents that Guide the Teaching of Reading:** Candidates become familiar with state and federal policies and curriculum documents, and they learn to use these to guide their short and long range planning.
- **Organizing and Managing Literacy Instruction:** Candidates learn how to organize and manage their classrooms for effective literacy instruction, including small and large group instruction, flexible grouping patterns, and individualized lessons. They learn how to make use of technological resources and other media, and they become familiar with a variety of instructional materials and approaches for diverse student needs.

*The CSU reading faculty strongly believe that our role in preparing teachers involves educating individuals who can draw on their knowledge base and experiences to make informed critical decisions that positively influence the lives of children and adolescents.*



**C**SU reading professors are a diverse group of educators who come from a wide range of backgrounds. However, we have a number of things in common.

**We are teachers.** Prior to becoming professors we taught in elementary or secondary school classrooms and worked with a range of students including English learners, bilingual students, special education students, and gifted students. In addition, many of us have held other public school positions such as reading specialist, reading resource teacher, curriculum coordinator, and school principal. We continue to work in public school classrooms with teachers and administrators in a variety of ways including volunteer classroom assistant, supervisor, co-researcher, and curriculum advisor and developer.

**We are authors.** We have written hundreds of books and articles. Many of these have been influential publications that have impacted literacy instruction throughout the nation.

**We are researchers.** Many of us are actively engaged in research projects with our university and school district colleagues. We have been involved in numerous research studies that contribute to greater understandings of the reading process, effective teaching, and teacher preparation. Further, we view as a significant responsibility the dissemination of research.

**We are leaders.** CSU reading faculty have served in leadership positions for local, state, national, and international professional organizations, and on CSU campuses.

**We are contributors to policymaking.** CSU reading faculty have been represented on influential panels and committees, including the panel that wrote the *Reading/Language Arts Framework for California Public Schools*, and the *English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools*, the Task Force that wrote the Reading Standard for the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing *Standards of Quality and Effectiveness for Accreditation of Professional Teacher Preparation Programs*, the panel that wrote the standards for the California Reading Certificate and Reading/Language Arts Specialist Credential, the Task Force that wrote *Strategic Teaching and Learning: Standards-based Instruction to Promote Literacy in Grades Four Through Twelve*, and committees responsible for drafting and reviewing the tasks, knowledge, and skills to be assessed by the RICA (Reading Instruction Competency Assessment).

**We are partners with school districts.** We work with district personnel to further educate teachers, provide parent education workshops, collaborate on curriculum development and problem-solving, and devise more effective ways to work with the students they serve. Nearly all of CSU reading faculty have provided professional development for California schools.

**T**eachers have the tremendous responsibility for teaching all students to read. CSU reading faculty members are proud to play a major role in preparing preservice and inservice teachers for this challenge. The CSU Chancellor's Office is engaged in an ongoing evaluation of the effect of teacher preparation programs. Survey data indicate that 80 percent of principals who supervise new teachers educated by the CSU find that the teachers are adequately or well prepared to teach reading to California content standards. In comparison to surveys of new teachers educated nationwide, more CSU graduates than their national counterparts report feeling adequately or well prepared to teach reading-language arts. Although we are pleased with these survey findings and appreciate that learning to be an expert reading teacher is a career-long process, until all new teachers are well prepared to teach reading-language arts, we still have work to do.

We are well aware that challenges will continue to face California educators in the decades to come. We take very seriously our role in preparing teachers to meet these challenges. Collectively, we are committed to ensuring that California's children and adolescents will be readers; as readers, they will have the greatest chance of becoming successful and productive citizens in today's changing world.

## GLOSSARY

**T**he definitions provided here are included to assist the reader in gaining a rudimentary understanding of the literacy terms and concepts as they are used in this report. For more comprehensive definitions, please see *The Literacy Dictionary* by T.L. Harris and R.E. Hodges, available through the International Reading Association <[www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)>.

**alphabetic principle** - the understanding that spoken sounds can be represented by letters or combinations of letters

**comprehension** - the process of thoughtfully making meaning of a written communication through the interaction of the reader's prior knowledge, experiences, and expectations and the information available in the text; includes literal understanding, evaluation, analysis, and interpretation

**decodable text** - written material for beginning readers that has a high percentage of words that can be identified through phonic analysis

**decoding** - using phonics and other word recognition strategies (such as syllabication or looking for roots or base words) to pronounce words

**expository text** - nonfiction text that argues, explains, or describes (such as the writing commonly found in textbooks)

**fluency** - the ability to recognize most words automatically in order to read expressively and at an appropriate rate

**language arts** - the school curriculum areas concerned with the development and improvement of reading, writing, spelling, speaking, listening, viewing, and visually representing

**literacy** - the ability to make use of written language to communicate effectively

**narrative text** - a written story, either actual or fictional

**orthographic knowledge** - an understanding and ability to use the writing and spelling system of a language

**phonemic awareness** - the understanding that speech consists of small units of sound (i.e., phonemes) and the ability to reflect on and manipulate those small units

**phonics** - a component of teaching reading and spelling that emphasizes letter-sound relationships and patterns

**predictable text** - reading material that is written in such a way that students can readily anticipate the language and/or events in the text; may include rhythmical, repetitive, or patterned text

**professional development** - the ongoing education of teachers after the initial certification

**reading strategies** - problem-solving behaviors that readers use to comprehend text; for example, summarizing, predicting, self-questioning

**structural analysis** - identification of word parts such as prefixes, roots, suffixes, compounds, and contractions

**teacher candidates** - individuals working toward the completion of a teaching credential



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The California State University would like to acknowledge the leadership provided by each of these reading faculty members in the creation of this document.

### Lead Co-Editors

<b>Dr. Hallie Yopp Slowik</b>	<b>CSU Fullerton</b>
<b>Dr. Gail Tompkins</b>	<b>CSU Fresno</b>
<b>Dr. MaryEllen Vogt</b>	<b>CSU Long Beach</b>

### Campus Representatives

Dr. Mary Wolfersberger	CSU Bakersfield
Dr. Nancy Williams	CSU Chico
Dr. Lisa Hutton	CSU Dominguez Hills
Dr. Valerie Helgren-Lempesis	CSU Hayward
Dr. Larry Rice	Humboldt State University
Dr. Darlene Michener	CSU Los Angeles
Dr. Irene Nares-Guzicki	CSU Monterey Bay
Dr. Marilyn Joshua-Shearer	CSU Northridge
Dr. Dennis Jacobsen	Cal Poly Pomona
Dr. Nancy Cecil	CSU Sacramento
Dr. Ina Katz	CSU San Bernardino
Dr. Dana Grisham	San Diego State University
Dr. Jamal Cooks	San Francisco State University
Dr. Sandra Hollingsworth	San José State University
Dr. Lisbeth Ceaser	Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and CalStateTEACH
Dr. Janet Powell	CSU San Marcos
Dr. Martha Ruddell	Sonoma State University
Dr. Armin Schulz	CSU Stanislaus

## INFORMATION

**For further information about CSU programs of teacher education, please contact any of our campuses.**

**CSU Bakersfield**

School of Education  
(661) 664-3401

**CSU Channel Islands**

Education Program  
(805) 437-8523

**CSU Chico**

College of Communication & Education  
(530) 898-4015

**CSU Dominguez Hills**

School of Education  
(310) 243-3510

**CSU Fresno**

Kremen School of Education & Human Development  
(559) 278-0210

**CSU Fullerton**

College of Human Dev. & Comm. Serv.  
(714) 278-3311

**CSU Hayward**

School of Education and Allied Studies  
(510) 885-3942

**Humboldt State University**

College of Professional Studies  
(707) 826-3961

**CSU Long Beach**

College of Education  
(562) 985-4513

**CSU Los Angeles**

Charter College of Education  
(323) 343-4300

**CSU Monterey Bay**

Center for Collaborative Education & Prof. Studies  
(831) 582-3517

**CSU Northridge**

College of Education  
(818) 677-2590

**Cal Poly Pomona**

College of Education & Integrative Studies  
(909) 869-2307

**CSU Sacramento**

College of Education  
(916) 278-6639

**CSU San Bernardino**

College of Education  
(909) 880-5600

**San Diego State University**

College of Education  
(619) 594-1424

**San Francisco State University**

College of Education  
(415) 338-2687

**San José State University**

College of Education  
(408) 924-3600

**Cal Poly San Luis Obispo**

University Center for Teacher Education  
(805) 756-5144

**CSU San Marcos**

College of Education  
(760) 750-4311

**Sonoma State University**

School of Education  
(707) 664-2132

**CSU Stanislaus**

College of Education  
(209) 667-3652

**CalStateTEACH**

(714) 278-5429



**For questions about this document  
please contact:**

Dr. Beverly L. Young

Director, Teacher Education and Public School Programs

CSU Chancellor's Office

401 Golden Shore, 6th Floor

Long Beach, CA 90802

(562) 951-4747

[byoung@calstate.edu](mailto:byoung@calstate.edu)







Prepared by  
the Reading Faculty of  
The California State University  
[www.calstate.edu](http://www.calstate.edu)