



**Barton College Redesign Efforts:  
How an EPP has Redesigned Courses from Information Learned from the SoR**

**Description of the EPP:**

Barton College is a four-year, private college located in eastern North Carolina. Barton focuses on academic achievement of students while also providing students with opportunities for leadership development. Barton takes advantage of its smaller class sizes with an intentional application of collaborative learning in every aspect of the students' college experience.

**Before the Redesign:**

Before the redesign and understanding the Science of Reading, there were areas in our program that were weak. In the area of oral language, there was a need to strengthen our instruction to have our candidates work on applying and implementing their development of morphemic knowledge. In practicums, where students enter different classrooms, it was hard to ensure they were observing the assessment of phonological/phonemic awareness skills along with learning about next steps in instruction based on the assessment results. One of the biggest weaknesses within the program was in our instruction of phonics and word recognition. Our program would have been categorized as limited in many areas including teaching candidates syllable types and how to scaffold learning to help students in this area when reading. Faculty wanted to enhance instruction to allow candidates to have a stronger depth of knowledge when it came to instruction on the six-syllable types, multisyllabic words, word analysis and creating systematic, multisensory phonics lessons. We also knew we could better help our candidates understand when, why, and how to use decodable texts to support students' application of decoding skills. In the area of comprehension, we found that our candidates were limited on identifying graphic organizers that promote comprehension across different genres. Before redesign efforts took place, there was a disconnect between what was taking place in our college courses and what was taking place in their practicums. We knew we had to have a collaborative and purposeful discussion with our district schools.

**Specific and Targeted Changes:**

Barton has been intentional in making changes to their practicums for their teacher candidates. The EPP has been purposeful in planning that their teacher candidates are placed in schools with districts that are looking at their own reading data and making necessary changes including new program initiatives where needed. They are also having open discussions around what the EPP's instruction looks like to ensure that candidates are having experiences in their practicums that allow them the hands-on approach and observations to mirror what they are learning with actual students in the classroom. The EPP is collaborating and coming alongside the district to share what will be implemented in courses at Barton to help students understand the SoR. Through in-depth discussions at the Science of Reading summer institute, we learned the importance of organizing our courses in a method that makes sense to our students, using concepts within Scarborough's Rope. For example, one course will focus on concepts like phonological awareness, decoding, and sight recognition. The next course in alignment will focus on concepts like teaching background knowledge, vocabulary, language structures, verbal reasoning, and literacy knowledge. With this change, we are hoping it will be more meaningful for our students to understand. We are also having them analyze their answer choices on questions and topics related to the Science of Reading. We learned when they truly think things through and rationalize the why behind it, it makes them stronger in their reading knowledge.

### **EPP Challenges:**

In the beginning, we had one faculty member on the team who was not teaching any of the reading courses. She had to come on board and learn the courses along with best practices on how to implement information learned from the Science of Reading. Another obstacle the EPP faced, like many other EPP's, was finding the time to complete LETRS training and take what they have been learning to make changes in their courses. The most recent obstacle our EPP has faced is losing a faculty member on the team who taught a majority of the reading courses. We have overcome this obstacle by rearranging the schedule and hiring an adjunct who is already familiar with the Science of Reading. The remaining faculty member on the team has already rearranged the courses based on specific and targeted approaches mentioned above.

### **Where Are We Now**

Qualitative data from assignments and interviews shows the teacher candidates are understanding the SoR topics and what next steps need to be addressed further in their practicum. The EPP feels very confident moving forward with the new design of the courses and purposeful assignments. The new design is in a much stronger and more logical order that will make more sense to our teacher candidates to prepare them to teach in their own reading classes and be successful on the Pearson reading exam. We also have acquired much more hands-on materials for our students to utilize in the classroom to help them understand and practice the concepts we are teaching. Our courses are much more aligned and intentional based on self-studies and the information learned through LETRS training and the Science of Reading.

### **Helpful Resources Utilized**

[-Heggerty Phonemic Awareness Curriculum](#)

- Teaching Reading Sourcebook
- The Reading Comprehension Blueprint by Nancy Lewis Hennessey
- Letter Lessons and First Words by Heidi Anne Mesmer
- Fundamentals of Literacy instruction and Assessment by Martha Hougen and Susan Smartt

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