

GUILFORD

COLLEGE

EPP Overview

Guilford College is a Quaker-affiliated liberal arts institution serving around 1400 students and offering more than 40 majors. The Department of Education Studies is a long-established teacher preparation program, offering licensure tracks in Elementary Education, Secondary Social Studies, Secondary English, and an Integrated Education Studies track which does not lead to teacher licensure. Our faculty consists of two tenured positions, one full-time temporary position, our licensure officer, and two adjunct faculty who teach one course each and are on contract only in the Spring semester.

The Education Studies Curriculum was designed as a spiral, introducing students to early concepts and revisiting those concepts in more depth throughout the major. Because of this, all students in the EPP complete the same core courses (EDUC 201 Philosophical and Ethical Reflection in Education; EDUC 202 Educational Psychology in Classrooms; EDUC 203 Contemporary/Historical Issues in Education; EDUC 302 Field Study in Cross Cultural Education; and PSY 224 Developmental Psychology), in addition to specialized courses in their chosen track.

Students in the Elementary Education program are required to complete a history course and discrete methods courses/internships, including EDUC 306: Processes in Elementary School Science and EDUC 307: Literacies Across the Curriculum, where the majority of Science of Reading Concepts were explicitly taught prior to our redesign. EDUC 309: Planning for Teaching and Learning and EDUC 308: Internship in Leadership, Collaboration and Community, are taught concurrently with EDUC 307, reinforcing SoR concepts through planning and a 90-hour pre-professional internship in our partner school.

Beginning the Redesign Process

As of May of 2022, content aligned with the Science of Reading was being taught primarily in one course: Literacies across the Curriculum. The course instructor, a local school principal, previously completed LETRS training and aligned the course syllabus with Science of Reading (SoR) content. None of the other instructors in the Department had completed LETRS training and, although important literacy concepts were being taught, all specific literacy instruction began after admission to the Elementary Education program, usually in the Spring of the students' junior year. The Department did not have a clear map of where particular content was being offered outside of EDUC 307, nor did we have a formative assessment of students' literacy knowledge. At the time, we depended on course performance and successful completion of the Pearson North Carolina Foundations of Reading Exam to assess our students' literacy knowledge.

Specific Targets and Their Completion

Our original NCICU self-study indicated that we need to provide earlier and more thorough instruction to our students in the area of phonics and phonemic instruction and to focus on reading interventions with SLDs. Although EDUC 307 was already aligned with Science of Reading content and instructional strategies, it did not provide adequate time for students to process that information over the course of our program. Additionally, we needed more trained faculty to teach that content. During the first of a series of redesign retreats, our adjunct literacy faculty reported a lack of time to teach reading comprehension, so we added more thorough teaching of comprehension skills, particularly with SLDs, as one of our targeted goals.

At this point, we are well on our way to meeting our targets, although the redesign is still a work in progress.

To address our goal of providing more LETRS-trained faculty members, two faculty enrolled in the NCICU-sponsored training opportunity, one of whom has completed it and the other of whom will complete by the end of September. To address our content goals, the Department conducted a series of retreats during which we used the [Literacy Ohio Science of Reading Planning Rubric](#) from the [Literacy Collaborative](#) provided by NCICU in order to carefully map SoR content as currently offered. Based on our results, we then revised the curriculum in order to guarantee an intentional, progressive introduction and expansion of content related to the Science of Reading. The Department determined that building knowledge in the Science of Reading, although most significant for Elementary Education majors, is also important for students in other major tracks, and therefore made the decision to offer some content to all majors. We identified ways in which we could build knowledge in the SoR in our curriculum "spiral," introducing important concepts earlier and teaching them in more depth over time. We identified which specific concepts needed more instructional time or practice and redistributed content across our entire curriculum.

EDUC 307 Literacies Across the Curriculum, in conjunction with our internship and assessment courses (EDUC 308/309), continues to offer the most Science of Reading content. However, rather than explicitly teaching concepts supported by the Science of Reading only in EDUC 307, the Department now introduces the Science of Reading in core courses before admission to the licensure programs, and offers that content to students in all major tracks. In EDUC 202, the role of the brain in processing language concepts is introduced, along with readings related to the relationship between reading and brain science. In EDUC 203, the history and impact of Science of Reading content is introduced. The most significant change occurs in EDUC 302: Field Study in Cross-Cultural Education, where students are introduced to content from all six units of LETRS, with emphasis on how children learn to read, English sounds, using assessment to drive instruction, and reading comprehension as well as a 40-hour internship working with English Learners. Finally, in EDUC 306: Processes of Elementary School Science, the connection between the brain and student learning is reinforced.

In order to address the need for more reading comprehension content and intervention strategies, a new course, EDUC 350, was piloted in Spring of 2023. Given that students in the later grades will likely encounter students who need reading interventions, we opened the course to students from all major tracks.

Challenges

We faced and continue to contend with several challenges in our curricular and course redesign, all of which are amplified by the time constraints put on EPPs and k-12 educators to complete this work. The first challenge is in developing a more effective assessment system. We are in the process of creating a formative assessment for our students, and this year used a commercially available review for the Foundations of Reading in order to informally assess our students' knowledge of SoR concepts. After piloting this assessment, we learned that our students possess an almost impossibly wide range of knowledge in Science of Reading concepts. Given this wide variation, we will develop new assessments to support ourselves and our students in understanding their goals and progress in SoR. We planned and plan to further develop those assessments with school partners, who are enthusiastic about the work but still in the process of their own SoR training (see below).

Teachers at our partner school are only halfway through LETRS training, and our school district, Guilford County Schools, uses a scripted curriculum. Although the teachers will finish LETRS this year, current circumstances limited our candidates' opportunities to be mentored by their cooperating teachers in practices aligned with the SoR, and they were unable to view that content for themselves unless they attended LETRS with their cooperating teacher. Additionally, post-COVID circumstances such as teacher-turnover, transportation issues, and the disappearance of college-wide community and school partnerships has limited our candidates' opportunities to practice instruction aligned to the SoR prior to entering our partner schools. Currently, both the Department and the College are reviving old partnerships

and developing new opportunities for our students (candidates and pre-candidates) to engage in the schools and community.

Funding continues to be a challenge despite the generous NCICU Goodnight Foundation sub-grant we received. The sub-grant paid for our series of retreats, all of which included stipends for representatives from our partner schools and/or experts in the field. However, even with minimal stipends, we were not able to purchase all of the materials needed for instruction aligned to the Science of Reading. For example, we ordered single copies of books that we need in multiples. We need more manipulatives and decodable texts, as well as some more advanced children's literature to teach comprehension. Hearing from our adjunct faculty and school partners helped us determine these needs. We will continue to need funds to bring partners and other stakeholders to campus for ongoing assessment and revision of our courses.

As a small EPP, the pace of this work is our most difficult challenge. Having few EDUC faculty impacts our ability to build knowledge in the science of reading, especially given the intense speed at which we are forced to work in order to meet the two-year deadline. It is very difficult for a small department to develop new partnerships, strengthen previously-existing ones, revise course content, complete LETRS training, work with school partners to create and implement new assessments across the curriculum, survey our graduates, teach our courses, develop new courses, write and maintain a grant or grants, keep up with ongoing changes in the licensure process, meet with our mentor teachers, spend significant amounts of time with our teacher candidates in the schools, offer services to our partner institutions, and to adequately perform other faculty duties such as advising, research, and service to the college. In addition to the responsibilities in the prior list, our two tenured faculty currently serve as Department Chairs or Program Coordinators, one in Education Studies and the other in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. With such limited resources, it is difficult to anticipate whether or not we will be able to offer newly-developed courses on a permanent basis. We have made a great deal of progress, but either a slowed timeline or further funding (or both) would make our work much more effective and ultimately, more sustainable.

Teaching/Impact/Assessment

At this point, the Department of Education Studies at Guilford College is in the implementation stage of our revised curriculum. We successfully mapped and revised our curriculum to guarantee intentional, systematic instruction of Science of Reading content. We piloted that content in EDUC 302, EDUC 203, EDUC 202, EDUC 306, and EDUC 307/8/9. We also piloted our newly-developed course in reading comprehension, and have collected limited formative data related to student learning. Faculty are participating in or have completed LETRS training, and teachers at our partner schools are moving forward in their own training process. New partnerships are being developed and old partnerships are being strengthened and revised. While the impact is difficult to measure at this point, course assessments indicate deeper knowledge of Science of Reading content and intervention strategies. We are developing a better assessment system and anticipate that, as students move through the revised curriculum, we will see further improvement over time.

