



Montreat College Science of Reading Journey Summary

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Montreat College is an independent, Christ-centered, liberal arts institution that educates students through intellectual inquiry, spiritual formation, and preparation for calling and career, all to impact the world for Jesus Christ. The mission of the Montreat College Teacher Education Program is to prepare teachers to be leaders and innovators for 21st century learning in the classroom, school, district, and profession at local, regional, national, and global levels.

Montreat College Teacher Education Program

Our EPP offers one license area – an undergraduate degree in Elementary Education (K-6) with Residency as an option. We also offer Educational Studies – a non-licensure program for those seeking to work with children or young adults in areas outside of elementary such as ministry, counseling, social work, and more. Each course in our EPP emphasizes evidence-based instruction, differentiation for student needs, and formative and summative assessment. Our goal is for our students to be in the elementary classroom from the very beginning of their coursework, with six hours per course of observation and professional service requirements. Partnering with area schools is paramount to our vision of being a resource for our schools, their students, and families. Students often volunteer time tutoring or coaching, serving the schools that are supporting them in their educational goals. Our Teacher Education Committee (TEC) is made up of area school leaders, Montreat professors, and student representatives. This board works to advise and approve all program decisions.

The Professional Year for teacher candidates typically starts in the fall semester of senior year. Candidates work every day with Cooperating Teachers from morning arrival until noon. In the spring semester candidates complete a full-time placement in the same classroom where they build their edTPA portfolio, have routine visits by their college supervisor, and complete full take-over of classroom responsibilities.

Where We Started

Prior to the Science of Reading (SoR) initiative, we offered a two-course literacy sequence, taken junior year, focused on Balanced Literacy. We had one faculty member who was trained in the evidence-based practices of phonological and phonemic awareness based on the Reading Panel Report (2000). The Balanced Literacy approach was also used in the local schools we partner with which allowed students to observe some of the elements incorporated from the SoR (the text used for the two-course sequence was Thompkins, G. E. (2017). *Literacy for the 21st Century: A*

balanced approach, (7th ed.). Pearson.).

We also had one sophomore level course in Children's Literature taught by an adjunct professor. This course was focused on the genres of children's literature and did not incorporate much of the SoR.

What Has Changed and What is Completed

With the grant funding from the Goodnight Foundation, we have been able to make numerous changes to our curriculum design and to our own professional understanding that will enable us to better support our students in the knowledge and skills of the SoR.

We now have a four-course sequence to our literacy coursework starting in the fall of sophomore year. It begins with an introduction to the main frameworks derived from the SoR in our Children's Literature course such as the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope, and the Four-Part Processing model. The integration of understanding genre as a part of comprehension, understanding decodables and their use in early literacy, and experience with narrative and informational texts are all now taught through the lens of the SoR. The changes in this course design are complete and will be implemented this fall (2023).

The next level of literacy instruction comes in the spring of sophomore year with Literacy I. This course focuses on the preliminary stages of the SoR – phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and evidence-based instruction in phonics. The new text is Honig, B., Diamond, L., & Gutlohn, L. (2018). *Teaching reading sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Arena Press. Following that course, students take Literacy II which completes the instruction aligned to the science of reading through the later stages of elementary reading and writing development. The final course in the sequence is Reading Research to Classroom Practice with a focus on review and application of what was learned in Literacy I and II, preparing them to pass the Pearson Foundations of Reading (190) exam before entering Student Teaching.

Changes in content and delivery of curriculum required work in aligning our curriculum with the SoR. To ensure that we prepared students for the Pearson Foundations of Reading (190) test, we examined the content of each chapter of the new textbook and aligned it with the objectives in each subarea of the Foundations of Reading Test. We embedded Foundations of Reading test preparation into Literacy I and Literacy II.

To complete our program curricular changes, we deleted two courses Technology in Education and Integrating Health and Arts to make room for two new courses - Integrating Technology and the Arts and Reading Research to Classroom Practice. These changes are complete and will begin this Spring with Technology and the Arts for our Freshman. Reading Research to Classroom Practice will be implemented next Spring (2025) when the first cohort of students can take it in the sequence.

For our professional training, two professors completed the LETRS training. We also hired a new professor who had already completed LETRS training as part of her previous university work. One of our professors completed the state provided Reading Research to Classroom

Practice instructor training. Two other professors intend to complete that training in the next year. Two professors completed Orton-Gillingham training to complement the LETRS training with a focus on differentiating instruction for students with special needs (e.g., dyslexia).

To implement the changes in our curriculum, we were able to purchase resources that align with district practice allowing our students to develop familiarity and skill before their Professional Year.

- Heggerty Curriculum
- Orton-Gillingham Phoneme Grapheme cards and Blending Boards
- Orton-Gillingham Morpheme Card Pack
- Decodable Texts
- Tools 4 Reading Sound Wall Solutions – posters, Kids Lips cards and resources

Overcoming Challenges

One challenge was in the adoption by North Carolina of the new Pearson Foundations of Reading Test (190) which now is based on the Science of Reading. We were able to develop alignment between our new text and the new test and embed test preparation in the current Literacy I and II sequence.

There are time and implementation strategies we have worked through. We created proposals for all curriculum changes that went through the approval process by the Academic Affairs Committee in the late fall (2022) so they could then be approved by the full faculty in the spring (2023) - which they have. We also needed to order resources in the fall (2022) to begin implementing candidate use in the spring of 2023.

A current challenge is reconciling the key components and practices involving the Word Recognition strands of Scarborough's Rope in the primary grades with edTPA requirements (edTPA will not accept the development of these skills as the Central Focus, but only as Related Skills). Until edTPA makes changes, we will require candidates to develop edTPA lessons based on Reading Literature (RL) and Reading Informational Text (RI) standards and not Reading Foundation standards.

Where We Are Now – Impacts

We feel confident about the changes, that we are better able to meet our students' needs and the school districts' needs. We have already noticed increased understanding in our students in the 2022-2023 Literacy I and Literacy II sequence - reporting connections from content covered in class to practice in their Focused Field Experience Reports and connections from the textbook content to Foundations of Reading Test questions during review sessions. It will be 1-2 years before the effects will be measurable through Foundations of Reading (190) test scores. Our first cohort of students who will have the full four-course sequence will begin this fall (2023) and complete the sequence in spring of 2025.

We are extremely grateful for the support and funding provided by NCICU, the Goodnight

Foundation, and the Science of Reading Task Force that has enabled us to accomplish so much for our program.