

# Nebraska Literacy Project Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Professional Learning Rubric

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## OVERVIEW

This Nebraska Literacy Project Professional Learning Rubric is intended to serve as a baseline for what constitutes a high-quality professional learning opportunity focused on evidence-based reading instruction for teachers of 4-year-olds through grade 3, in alignment with Nebraska Revised State Statute 79-2607. While the rubric outlines foundational knowledge and essential components of instruction, it does not encompass all professional learning educators may require. **Additionally, some components may not be applicable across all age ranges within the 4-year-old to grade 3 span, particularly in early childhood settings.** Educators and leaders are encouraged to use professional judgment in determining appropriate application and to seek additional professional learning to meet the full range of instructional needs.

The indices on the rubric are evidence-based, align with a structured literacy approach to teaching reading, and are meant to represent the knowledge participants gain about evidence-based reading instruction through the professional learning, which can be applied to instruction across various grade levels in an appropriate way for the grade and the age of the students. Structured Literacy is not one single program or method of instruction, it is characterized by the provision of systematic, explicit instruction that integrates listening, speaking, reading, and writing and emphasizes the structure of language across the speech sound system (phonology), the writing system (orthography), the structure of sentences (syntax), the meaningful parts of words (morphology), the relationships among words (semantics), and the organization of spoken and written discourse. (International Dyslexia Association. (2019). *Structured Literacy: An introductory guide*. Baltimore, MD: Author.) The rubric is intended for use by team or committee members who have completed in-depth professional learning in evidence-based reading and have experience applying this knowledge in the classroom. As a result, team and committee members can make informed decisions about the best match of professional learning providers to local needs and contexts.

## LEADERSHIP AND NEMTSS SYSTEM

Leadership to support and sustain the work is essential. Leaders need to be informed of evidence-based practices and be able to provide ongoing feedback to teachers who are implementing the practices. They also need to support implementation of High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), which includes initial training and ongoing professional learning in a format that is best suited for adult learners. Leaders must also provide time for unit and lesson internalization and a school schedule that supports adequate time for reading instruction.

Just as important are the MTSS systems districts have in place. District and building teams should analyze outcome and implementation data on a regular basis to identify other necessary professional learning opportunities to increase literacy outcomes, such as: the art of teaching, engagement strategies, science of learning, writing as a reciprocal process to reading, and culturally responsive teaching practices. Grade-level and collaborative MTSS teams use a problem-solving process to identify students who are at-risk on [state-approved screening measures](#). Diagnostic assessments can be further used to identify where to begin to provide instruction for students who are at-risk. For more information on MTSS, see the [NeMTSS Framework](#).

Here are other resources developed by NDE to support evidence-based reading instruction:

- [NebraskaREADS](#)
- [Foundational Literacy Instructional Routines](#), which includes a complimentary webinar series.
- [Nebraska's 2021 College and Career Ready Standards for English Language Arts](#)
- [Key Instructional Shifts for Quality Implementation of CCR Standards](#)
- [Dyslexia Guide](#)

**“Every student deserves a great teacher, not by chance, but by design.” - Doug Fisher**

## HOW TO USE THIS RUBRIC

The rubric is subdivided into three sections: 1) Qualifying Criteria for Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Professional Learning, 2) Core Components, and 3) Scoring.

- Section 1 contains Qualifying Criteria, which are components that a professional learning grounded in Evidence-Based Reading Instruction must contain to be considered for adoption.
- Section 2 includes six (6) Core Components: How Children Learn to Read, Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension, each with their associated indicators.
- Section 3 includes a summative score sheet for all 6 components.

**Step 1.** Review Section 1: Qualifying Criteria prior to beginning the review of professional learning. Submission must contain all of the qualifying criteria. If not all criteria are met, stop the review process here.

**Step 2.** Review Section 2: Core Components.

- If all of the required criteria of the indicator is included in the evidence, the submission may be awarded one (1) point.
- If all of the required criteria of the indicator is not included in the evidence, the submission may be awarded zero (0) points.

**Step 3.** Input and total the scores received for Section 2 on the Score Sheet. It is recommended that rubrics receive 42 points. If any are missing, include a rationale statement and any proposed edits to add those indicators.

## EXPLANATION OF TERMS

- **Practical Considerations:** Explains what the instructional strategy or skill is, how to teach it, and how it varies across developmental stages.
- **Practice Opportunities:** Designated time during the professional learning to model a particular instructional strategy or skill and receive feedback from a peer; or a bridge-to-practice activity designed to apply a particular instructional strategy or skill in the classroom.
- **Adapting instruction to support cognitive, linguistic, and neurobiological variations:** Recognizes the variability that exists within classrooms (multilingual/multidialectal learners, high ability learners, and students with disabilities, including those who show characteristics of dyslexia) and the need to modify the teaching strategies to meet the diverse needs of students.
- **Including:** The list of items that follow are required criteria and each item must be included.
- **Such as:** The list of items that follow are examples and do not all need to be included.

## Section 1: Qualifying Criteria for Evidence-Based Reading Instruction Professional Learning

		Yes/No	Evidence/Notes
1	Provides attention to evidence-based reading instruction in all six of the core components: How Children Learn to Read, Phonological and Phonemic Awareness, Phonics - Decoding and Encoding, Fluency, Vocabulary, and Comprehension.		
2	Provides interactive, in-person or synchronous components as part of the professional learning course.		
3	Provides embedded checks for understanding and/or assessments throughout the professional learning.		
4	Provides embedded practice opportunities for educators to apply knowledge throughout the professional learning.		
5	Explains the importance of a comprehensive literacy approach grounded in the Science of Reading, which includes explicit, systematic, and sequential instruction.		
6	Explains how relying on instructional practices for teaching reading that are not grounded in evidence-based research, such as the three-cueing system and leveling of students, can impede students' acquisition of proficient reading skills.		

## Section 2: Core Components

Component 1: How Children Learn to Read		Score	Evidence/Notes
1.1	Explains that learning to read is complex because the human brain is not naturally wired to read. For most people, this requires explicit instruction.		
1.2	Explains the dual importance of language comprehension and word recognition skills to skilled reading as demonstrated in the theoretical frameworks, <u>such as</u> the Simple View of Reading, Scarborough's Rope, the Active View of Reading, Ehri's Phases.		
1.3	Explains the cognitive processes within the brain that facilitate reading, <u>such as</u> the four part processing model for word recognition and the three levels of text representation to build a mental model.		
1.4	Explains the cognitive, linguistic, and neurobiological variations (e.g., dyslexia) among readers, <u>such as</u> dyslexia and comprehension difficulties.		
1.5	Explains the importance of early and regular universal screening, diagnostic assessments, and on-going progress-monitoring to drive instruction and intervention.		
1.6	Includes information and tips for teachers related to helping children and families work with local family literacy centers to strengthen home and family literacy programs and better instruct children in reading. Note: The Nebraska Reads resources includes a wealth of family literacy resources that could be shared.		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>/6</b>

## Section 2: Core Components

Component 2: Phonological and Phonemic Awareness		Score	Evidence/Notes
2.1	Explains how to categorize the phonemes in English based on articulatory features.		
2.2	Explains practical considerations for levels of phonological sensitivity: word boundaries, syllables, onsets/rimes, and phonemes.		
2.3	Explains practical considerations for teaching key phonemic awareness skills, <u>including</u> blending and segmenting.		
2.4	Explains practical considerations for the principles of phonemic awareness instruction: brief, frequent, multimodal, and articulatory.		
2.5	Provides specific attention for adapting phonological and phonemic awareness instruction to support cognitive, linguistic, and neurobiological variations (e.g., dyslexia) among readers.		
2.6	Explains practical considerations for using formal and informal assessment results to address phonological and phonemic awareness difficulties.		
2.7	Explains practical considerations for how dialects, language differences, and allophonic variation affect phonological and phonemic development.		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>/7</b>

## Section 2: Core Components

Component 3: Phonics – Decoding and Encoding		Score	Evidence/Notes
3.1	Explain the reciprocal role of decoding and encoding in developing automatic word recognition skills.		
3.2	Explains practical considerations for the principles of phonics instruction: systematic, cumulative, and explicit instruction in both encoding and decoding to get to accurate and automatic word reading and spelling.		
3.3	Explains practical considerations for teaching basic principles of English orthography for single-syllable words.		
3.4	Explains practical considerations for teaching basic principles of English orthography for multisyllabic words.		
3.5	Explains practical considerations for teaching morphological word parts like roots, prefixes and suffixes in ways that support decoding and encoding.		
3.6	Explains practical considerations for explicitly teaching irregular words focusing on the regular and irregular grapheme-phoneme correspondences, <u>such as</u> heart word routines.		
3.7	Explains the importance of using decodable texts as a scaffold that leads to the reading of authentic texts.		
3.8	Provides specific attention for adapting phonics instruction to support cognitive, linguistic, and neurobiological variations (e.g., dyslexia) among readers.		
3.9	Explains practical considerations for using formal and informal assessment results to address phonics, decoding and encoding, difficulties.		
3.10	Explains practical considerations regarding similarities and differences between English orthography and other languages and dialects, <u>including</u> access to resources to support multilingual and multidialectal students learning English.		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>/10</b>

## Section 2: Core Components

Component 4: Fluency*		Score	Evidence/Notes
4.1	Explains how the components of reading fluency (rate, accuracy, and prosody) contribute to skilled reading.		
4.2	Explains practical considerations for the principles of fluency instruction, <u>such as</u> modeling, practice with feedback, repeated reading, wide-range reading.		
4.3	Provides specific attention for adapting fluency instruction to support cognitive, linguistic, and neurobiological variations (e.g., dyslexia) among readers.		
4.4	Explains practical considerations for using formal and informal assessment results to address fluency difficulties in rate, accuracy, and prosody.		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>/4</b>

\*Fluency components are optional for pre-K professional learning.

## Section 2: Core Components

Component 5: Vocabulary		Score	Evidence/Notes
5.1	Explains the role of vocabulary in oral and written language comprehension.		
5.2	Explains the three tiers of vocabulary words and how to determine the level of instruction for each tier.		
5.3	Explains practical considerations for teaching morphology, <u>including</u> word roots, prefixes, and suffixes.		
5.4	Explains practical considerations for direct and explicit vocabulary instruction, <u>such as</u> a student friendly definition, visuals, examples & nonexamples, interaction with the word, etc.		
5.5	Explains practical considerations for direct and explicit independent word learning strategies <u>such as</u> morphemic and contextual analysis.		
5.6	Explains practical considerations for indirect (contextual) methods of vocabulary instruction, <u>such as</u> wide reading and providing a rich language environment.		
5.7	Provides specific attention for adapting vocabulary instruction to support cognitive, linguistic, and neurobiological variations (e.g., dyslexia) among readers.		
5.8	Explains practical considerations for using formal and informal assessment results to address vocabulary difficulties.		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>/8</b>

## Section 2: Core Components

Component 6: Comprehension		Score	Evidence/Notes
6.1	Explains the differences between listening comprehension and reading comprehension.		
6.2	Explains the factors that contribute to language comprehension, <u>such as</u> background knowledge, vocabulary, language structure, verbal reasoning, literacy knowledge, cultural knowledge, and theory of mind.		
6.3	Explains practical considerations for building and activating student background knowledge.		
6.4	Explains practical considerations for sentence level, paragraph level, and text level comprehension.		
6.5	Explains practical considerations for keeping text at the center of instruction and using strategies to support reading comprehension, <u>such as</u> summarizing, making inferences, generating questions, monitoring comprehension, graphic and semantic organizers, answering questions, cooperative learning, story structure, and multiple strategy instruction.		
6.6	Provides specific attention for adapting comprehension instruction to support cognitive, linguistic, and neurobiological variations (e.g., dyslexia) among readers.		
6.7	Explains practical considerations for using formal and informal assessment results to address underlying comprehension difficulties.		
		<b>Total</b>	<b>/7</b>

## Section 2: Score Sheet

**Directions:**

- 1) Review the responses recorded in Section 1: Qualifying Criteria to determine if a professional learning submission should be approved or rejected. If approved, move to step 2. If not approved, end review.
- 2) Enter the score that the evidence-based reading instruction professional learning submission received for each Core Component found in Section 2 into its respective "Core Component Total" box below.
- 3) Total the scores received and enter the new, cumulative score into the "Total" box.
- 4) Determine if the PLS meets the expectation that all components are included. If any are missing, include a rationale statement and any proposed edits to add those indicators.
- 5) Indicate the final decision in the "Final Determination" box.

<b>Meets all Qualifying Criteria and Components</b>		<b>Yes/No</b>
<b>Core Criteria and Component</b>	<b>Standard Total</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<i>How Children Learn to Read</i>	<i>/6</i>	
<i>Phonological and Phonemic Awareness</i>	<i>/7</i>	
<i>Phonics</i>	<i>/10</i>	
<i>Fluency</i>	<i>/4</i>	
<i>Vocabulary</i>	<i>/8</i>	
<i>Comprehension</i>	<i>/7</i>	
<b>Total:</b> <i>(It is recommended that rubrics receive 42 points. If any are missing, include a rationale statement and any proposed edits to add those indicators.)</i>	<b>/42</b>	<b>Determination:</b>
<b>Based on the criteria, should this submission be approved or rejected?</b>		<b>Final Determination:</b>

## **ADAPTED FROM THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:**

- International Dyslexia Association. (2018) Knowledge and Practice Standards for Teachers of Reading.  
<https://or.dyslexiaida.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2018/10/ida-standards2018.pdf>
- Pennsylvania Department of Education. (2022, October) Structured Literacy (SL) Program Framework Guidelines.  
<https://www.stateboard.education.pa.gov/Documents/Structured%20Literacy%20Competencies%20Program%20Framework%20Guidelines.pdf>
- The Reading League. (2023, March) Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines.  
<https://www.thereadingleague.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/The-Reading-League-Curriculum-Evaluation-Guidelines-2023.pdf>
- Wyoming Department of Education. (2023, May) WDE Literacy Competency Area Requirements.  
<https://edu.wyoming.gov/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Competency-Area-Requirements.pdf>