



FOR STATE LEADERS

Here's How

State Sustainability Strategies

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Collaboration with Higher Education

Reaching Out to Colleges and Universities to Align Pre-service Preparation with SBRR

Programs that prepare teachers and administrators play a key role in establishing new knowledge and skills in the profession. In order to implement and sustain evidence-based reading programs, states will need to take action to ensure new teachers and administrators coming out of pre-service institutions have an appropriate grounding in scientifically based reading research. This includes knowledge of effective instructional techniques, firm understanding of assessments and data utilization, and the qualities of an effective school-wide reading model. An on-going, active, and reciprocal relationship between the state education agency (SEA) and the state's institutions of higher education (IHEs) is necessary to produce highly qualified graduates that can utilize scientifically based reading instruction in their schools.

How can states and IHEs develop effective relationships?

Five ways states and IHEs can initiate effective working relationships are:

1. Develop a strategic plan for communication and collaboration (*i.e.*, forming a higher education consortium, collaborative, or task force).
2. Identify potential institutions and faculty members for participation.
3. Contact the deans of the institutions for project notification, purpose, and invitation to participate.
4. Invite faculty to attend events deemed applicable by the state.
5. Provide on-going follow up support to faculty members via information dissemination, professional development, and technical assistance as stated in the strategic plan.

Shari Butler, an expert in connecting Reading First and higher education, describes her experience, "We had been developing and training in-service teachers in SBRR [through the] Teacher Reading Academies. Often during the trainings, teachers would say 'I wish we had learned this in college.' State department personnel felt the same way and discussions began, regarding ways to get this information to pre-service teachers." She goes on to share "We identified IHE's that had an interest in participating by speaking with our colleagues. The first year, we only had 15 professors involved. We held two meetings to discuss the information in the academies and to identify ways to integrate the materials into our college courses. By the second year, we had professors asking to be involved in the project. As the project continued to grow we sent letters to deans and department heads asking them to nominate participants."

Getting SBRR Training for Pre-service Teachers

What steps can IHEs and SEAs take to ensure that pre-service teachers are trained in the principles of scientifically based reading instruction? There are many ways to approach this question, and, this section will show you four strategies and examples of how some states have started using them. The four strategies include: supporting teacher educators, adjusting reading course syllabi, providing internships or practicum opportunities, and collaborating with licensure departments.

(See GETTING SBRR, Page 3)

Sustainability is the ability of a program to operate on its core beliefs and values (its reading culture) and use them to guide essential and inevitable program adaptations over time while maintaining improved outcomes.

Adapted from Century and Levy, 2002

Processes and Systems to Support Higher Education

The Texas Reading First Higher Education Collaborative (HEC) is designed to engage faculty members from Texas colleges, universities, community colleges, and alternative certification programs in active efforts to improve the reading achievement of Texas students. Established in 2000 with 15 faculty members from four institutions, HEC has grown quickly and now includes hundreds of educators from more than 80 higher education institutions. In 2003, HEC became an integral facet of the Texas Reading First Initiative. Faculty of educational administration and educational leadership programs joined the collaborative in 2005 to ensure that principals and other school administrators understand their important role in supporting scientifically based reading instruction for all students.

The Texas Higher Education Collaborative developed a HEC Procedures Manual, based on the activities of the HEC. The HEC works with the National Higher Education Collaborative, which has utilized the format and guiding principles of the HEC to promote collaboration with faculty in numerous other states. The procedures manual might provide other

states a model of collaboration among higher education institutions and a vehicle to provide support to IHE administrators and faculty as they integrate significant content, such as SBRR, into their teacher education programs and courses.

A collaborative project initiated by a grant from the United States Department of Education, the Reading First Teacher Education Network (RFTEN) supports the implementation of SBRR at thirty-one minority-serving institutions. Although the original focus was on supporting minority-serving IHEs, the materials and resources of RFTEN have broad application with all teacher education programs. The ultimate impact of the project is to improve the reading achievement of PreK-12 students. The RFTEN special report on [Inclusivity and Exemplary Reading Instruction: SBRR and the Pre-service Preparation of Minority Teachers](#) includes useful survey instruments and tools used to help IHEs review their programs and coursework in an effort to integrate research based reading practices.

Learn More

[RFTEN Special Report: Licensure Tests and Effective Reading Instruction](#)

[National Council on Teacher Quality: What Education School Aren't Teaching about Reading and What Elementary Teachers Aren't Learning](#)

Getting SBRR Training for Pre-service Teachers (cont.)

Support Teacher Educators

Support teacher educators in incorporating scientifically based reading research and instruction in their practice by providing pathways for information dissemination, technical assistance, and the development of professional learning communities.

For example, in West Virginia, the Reading First director reported, “We have a [Higher Education Symposium](#) twice a year, which we wrote into our grant, where we invite all reading faculty from all of our teacher education institutions and we keep them updated with Reading First. These meetings have evolved from me providing them with information from the state level to them participating in other scientifically based reading projects.”

Adjust Reading Syllabi

Adjust reading course syllabi to reflect the five components of reading, evidence-based practices, and establishing an effective school wide reading model.

The West Virginia director continues, “I just assumed that our higher education faculty was using SBRR in setting up their courses, and when I became involved with the Higher Education Symposium, I found out very quickly that wasn’t the case.

One of the first things we did with those universities was our [Gap Analysis Project](#). At our first meeting, I did a little review with them on the purpose of why we were there and what we were doing. Then if they were interested in me coming to their campus to talk to their reading faculty, I did. But it was nothing that was imposed on them. One of the institutions that chose to participate was Marshall University. We talked about things that must align in their coursework so their teachers would be properly trained to begin being teachers and we talked about questions that they might have along the way.

Next we created a [Gap Analysis Matrix](#). We put all of those things that they would have to align down the left hand side. They identified for me every course they taught that was a reading course or touched on reading. Then I sat down for a period of two hours with the reading faculty who chose to participate and we decided where that topic was currently taught in which courses, and if it wasn’t where it needed to be taught.

So what we asked them to do was not to develop new courses, but to think about where would be the best place to put that information in for their pre-service teachers. Eventually what did happen was that some of them just totally redesigned some of their coursework.”

Provide Internship or Practicum Opportunities

Provide internship or practicum opportunities to pre-service teachers and administrators in schools that have instituted the tenets of Reading First.

Collaborate with State Licensure Offices

Collaborate with the state teacher licensure department to integrate scientifically based reading research into the teacher licensure requirements

In the words of a Reading First state director “We have been instrumental in working with the licensing for reading specialists. If you look at our reading specialist licensing procedures, you will see Reading First all over the place. The reading standards are integrated into the licensing standards, which we worked hard to include scientifically based reading.”



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