



Administrator's Guide

A guide for understanding the workings and impact of E-Prep

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Introduction

E-Prep™, the **Educator Preparation for Achievement in Reading Professional Learning Program** is a year long professional development program that prepares educators to teach young children to read. It uses technology as a tool to support adult learning and as an invaluable resource for the teaching and learning of language arts in the primary grades and beyond. The program is designed for school systems that are interested in dramatically improving reading skill development.

Schools that participate in the E-Prep Program commit to one academic year of practical and intensive site-based professional learning that includes five face-to-face workshops, online distance learning, and application of evidence-based practices in the educator's own classroom with reading students and discussions about their learning with colleagues and their course leader in online forums.

By incorporating proven theories of teaching reading, using technology that is engaging and successful with students, and placing an emphasis on assessment data to drive instructional practices, the program successfully improves the quality of teaching and the performance of students.

This Administrator's Guide was developed to help school district administrators better understand all the facets of the program and how they work together to bring a powerful transformation to the teaching of reading.

Why Implement E-Prep In Your School District

Reading is the foundation of learning. Reading achievement is the measurement of success in our schools. E-Prep has been shown to drive measurable improvement in reading proficiency. It is unique in its comprehensive approach, which leads and guides teachers as they learn and assimilate proven methods for teaching reading. The benefits of E-Prep include:

- **Accelerates Reading Achievement Results**

The E-Prep professional development program is specially designed to improve the teaching of reading and accelerate reading achievement results in ways that can be sustained over time.

Don't be satisfied with adequate yearly progress (AYP) in reading. With E-Prep, ample yearly progress is possible!

- **Achieves NCLB Compliance**

With E-Prep training, high quality reading professionals who are capable of responding to the needs of all students will emerge, making it possible and highly probable that “every student will read by the end of the third grade”.

- **Changes the Reading Culture**

E-Prep advances educators’ knowledge, skills, methods, and practices in ways that transform classroom instruction. Through independent action research, case study and subsequent curriculum design focused on expanding a student’s existing skills and prior knowledge, a school’s “reading culture” changes to one that advances student reading achievement beyond grade level expectations.

- **Instruction Is Informed by Assessment**

Teachers formally assess students’ reading skills and learn to use reading assessment data to unveil students’ strengths, weaknesses, and achievement gaps. Then teachers are shown how to make curriculum decisions based on assessment results.

- **Improves Teacher Quality**

Teacher quality improves, because E-Prep simultaneously advances content knowledge and teaching skills resulting in changes in the educator’s attitudes and approaches to the real work of teaching.

- **Collaboration Invites Excellence**

Educators work collaboratively in face-to-face meetings, in reading classrooms, and in virtual environments to produce, field-test, refine, and share strategies targeted to areas of reading improvement.

- **Encourages Dynamic Adaptation of Methods**

E-Prep teaches educators to continuously focus their attention on diagnostic data, which they then use to modify real-time instruction in the classroom.

- **Standards Based**

Teachers are shown how to identify student performance standards, define performance gaps, and teach to mastery. Assessments and instruction are highly individualized in response to student needs.

- **Based on National Reading and Technology Standards**

E-Prep is based on the best practices defined by the International Reading Association's (IRA) Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised 2003. Teachers will become competent in performing to the IRA standards and will also demonstrate competency in meeting the standards published by the International Society for Technology in Education's National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (ISTE NETS.T).

- **Engages Parents in Success**

Parents gain insights into their child's specific reading challenges and learn about resources and tools that can assist with reading improvement at home.

Who should attend

For the greatest impact, all teachers who teach reading in grades K-3 in a school or district should attend. That includes:

- In-service K-3 classroom teachers
- Reading specialists
- Title I teachers
- Early intervention specialists
- Special Education teachers
- School administrators

E-Prep Gets Results

"My students' reading skills are dramatically improving and I feel that I am meeting their individual needs."

Lisa Burks, Midway Elementary School, Forsyth County, Georgia

What others are saying about E-Prep

"...parents were impressed that we had used technology to determine particular skills deficits of their child. They were equally impressed that we had used the data to develop a program of instruction for their child to address these areas."

Cynthia Hatcher, Midway Elementary School, Forsyth County, GA

"E-Prep training is helping me assess my students' skills more closely. I can adjust my lessons accordingly. The on-the-job training I am receiving is helping me with individualized data on all my students and then provides specific skills for each child."

Janet McDaniel, teacher, Midway Elementary School, Forsyth County, GA

The pilot of this program, conducted in Georgia schools, has been in use for several years with statistically significant student improvement. The response from teachers and administrators participating in the pilot program has been strong and positive. Their comments include:

"Since the implementation of the Program, the methodology of instruction has changed. Teachers are using technology to motivate students with media and technology-created instructional materials. The Program has had a significant impact on student achievement. I strongly support the Program."

Margaret Merchant, Assistant Principal, Putnam County Elementary School, Eatonton, GA

"The Program totally revolutionized our school's approach to designing instruction based on the assessment of students' needs."

Janne Childs, Principal, Mattie Wells Primary School, Jones County, GA

"To ensure that all students receive the needed instruction to read by the end of the third grade, the school has taken a very important step by implementing this professional learning program for all of the teachers. It has been a very rewarding experience this year to see the growth that the students have gained during the school year. Teachers are being well equipped with strategies that are scientifically proven and research-based to work with students in an effort to teach them to read."

Towanda Finney, Second Grade Teacher, Putnam County Elementary School, Eatonton, GA

How it Works: The Components of E-Prep

E-Prep is a blended learning experience that includes face-to-face workshops and meetings, self-paced online coursework, discussions with peers and course leader, and practical application of learning through structured activities in the educator's own classroom with reading students. This robust combination of learning opportunities is unique to E-Prep and results in sustainable yearly reading progress.

“..it can be frustrating for teachers when training is not “on the job” and you do not get the opportunity to use newly learned information right away. The E-Prep Program allows teachers to put new strategies into action the next day.”

Angel DeMore, Midway Elementary School, Forsyth County, GA

E-Prep Academy

The school district appoints an E-Prep Course Leader who attends E-Prep Academy for training on leading the course.

The E-Prep Academy for Course Leaders is a 5-day classroom-training program that prepares educators to lead implementation of the E-Prep Program in a school or school system. Prospective course leaders are taught how to establish the pre-conditions for successful training in a school. They receive instruction in program technical requirements and use of school readiness checklists. The prospective course leader learns to deliver face-to-face instruction, to monitor online instruction, and to prepare, analyze and present student learning data.

Where it is held:

The Academy is taught in Georgia under an agreement with Educational Learning Systems (ELS). Your ELS representative can notify you of the dates and locations of the upcoming Academy for Course Leaders.

The Curriculum: Five Units of Instruction

The E-Prep Program defines reading comprehension as the ability to bring meaning to written text. Recognizing that independent reading comprehension is the primary and overarching goal of reading, E-Prep prepares teachers to provide instruction in each of the essential components of reading.

The **No Child Left Behind Act of 2000** names five research-based Essential Components of Reading:

1. Phonemic Awareness
2. Phonics
3. Reading Fluency
4. Vocabulary Development
5. Text Comprehension

Each of these Essential Components of Reading serves as a core knowledge focus for one instructional unit, or one day of the E-Prep Academy, and all are presented in the context of valuable connections to the development of text meaning. The topics for each day are as follows:

Day 1: Assessment Guides Teaching for Meaning

Day 2: Phonemic Awareness and Phonics Builds Capacity for Meaning

Day 3: Text Comprehension Is Meaning

Day 4: Vocabulary Sustains Meaning

Day 5: Fluency Enhances Capacity for Meaning

E-Prep School Year

The E-Prep Program establishes **performance-based objectives** for each participant, designed to improve the educator's knowledge of and ability to use:

- Grade appropriate standards
- Informal and technology-based assessments
- A variety of data sources to plan instruction
- A variety of instructional practices

The participants will learn to provide customized instruction based on each student's specific learning needs.

The **E-Prep Program** is implemented through **five units** of instruction that are built around an Essential Reading Topic and are accessible via E-Prep's online gateway.

Each unit consists of:

- 7 hours of face-to-face training
- 8 hours of online coursework
- 10 hours of classroom implementation

The **E-Prep Program** course components comprise 125 hours of performance-based coursework. The instructional matrix looks like this:

Essential Reading Topic	Face-to-Face Training (35 Hours)	On-line Coursework (40 Hours)	Classroom Implementation (50 Hours)
I. Assessment Guides Teaching for Meaning (25 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scientifically-Based Reading Research Software Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional Readings Cognitive Tests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Research Project Case Study Project
II. Phonics Builds Capacity for Meaning (25 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Course Tools Training Reading Assessment Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Threaded Discussions Professional E-mail 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Software Field-Test Reading Assessment Field-Test
III. Vocabulary Expands Meaning (25 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Strategies and Methods Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Journal Reflections Lesson Design, Delivery, and Assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Strategies and Methods Field Test
IV. Text Comprehension Is Meaning (25 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Materials Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructional Materials Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reading Materials Field-Test
V. Fluency Enhances Meaning (25 Hours)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperative and Problem-Based Learning Training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and Evaluation of Online Resources 	

Face-to-Face Training

- Five classroom training dates

The first segment of each of the five instructional sessions is a full day of face-to-face training by the E-Prep Course Leader. Ideally, this training is conducted in a modern computer laboratory.

- Release for in-service workshop

E-Prep Program participants should be released from instructional and administrative responsibilities for training that typically begins at 8:00 a.m. and concludes at 4:00 p.m.

- What happens during the training day

The E-Prep Program engages educators as active learners using computer hardware, productivity software, tool-based and instructional applications, and online resources.

- Immediate application in the classroom

The E-Prep Program's face-to-face curriculum models data-driven student grouping strategies and concrete instructional practices to be emulated in the educator's own classroom during the very next class meeting.

This important requirement for immediate transfer of new knowledge to classroom practice is unique to E-Prep and contributes to successful program implementation.

Online Training

The second segment of each session is available through the E-Prep Program's online course delivery system. This segment defines a series of learning and performance tasks requiring educators to refine content knowledge and apply the strategies learned in the face-to-face training seminar.

The tasks are designed to further reinforce the learning by applying it to real life situations. Teachers work on tasks as individual learning assignments, but also draw upon collaboration with their grade level teams and school faculty. They conduct case study and action research assignments with reading students in their own classroom.

The practical application of skills is complemented by online assignments such as:

- Completion of cognitive tests
- Documentation of performance task completion
- Records of virtual communication and online collaboration.

Through this combination of online work and in-class practicum, educators become active participants in a virtual learning community and peer review becomes a common and valued practice.

These methods effect reading culture change.

Classroom Implementation

Classroom Implementation is an important component of the program with many benefits. In addition to knowledge of reading skill development, participants learn important implementation techniques, use of diagnostic data to inform instruction and specialized intervention strategies.

Release time needed

The Classroom Implementation phase is enhanced by structured time for educators to collaborate in completing classroom assignments. School administrators support the E-Prep Program by appropriating release time to teachers for this important work.

Research-based instruction in the classroom

The **E-Prep Program** prepares educators to understand the National Reading Panel's five essential components of reading instruction.

E-Prep holds participants accountable for applying the skills gained in professional development directly to classroom practice by requiring educators to complete assignments that require intensive work with students.

Grade level benchmarks

The Classroom Implementation phase requires educators to work independently and as grade level and school teams to use diagnostic data to identify the specific instructional needs of students. Identified student needs guide planning and teaching which leads students to success in meeting grade level benchmarks.

Intervention strategies

E-Prep participants work collaboratively to develop intervention strategies that are guided by scientifically based reading research and address the specific learning needs of students. Educators plan, design, create, and field-test intervention strategies in their own classrooms

Measuring success

Once strategies are implemented, educators evaluate the efficacy of the strategy and share student learning outcomes with colleagues. This process of reflection, sharing and peer review focuses attention to the impact of the strategy on student learning.

Software Used in E-Prep

E-Prep incorporates the use of software for assessment, instruction and practice of the essential reading skills in the classroom.

E-Prep Program Software Product Descriptions

Assessment

Lexia Comprehensive Reading Test™

Lexia's computerized diagnostic reading assessment gives teachers the information they need for instruction and gives school administrators graphic reports showing performance data as it occurs.

Lexia Comprehensive Reading Test™ is a 5- to 40-minute assessment that provides an accurate evaluation of a student's abilities and skills with extensive reports identifying specific instructional needs and prescribed practice activities.

Reading Skills

Lexia's reading software is based upon rigorous research drawn from the Orton-Gillingham system, a robust, proven approach to teaching reading with a track record of over 60 years of success. Structured phonics-based activities with increasing levels of complexity systematically encourage the child to practice specific skills in a carefully paced program. Engaging graphics stimulate focused learning without the excessive sound or animation found in many "edutainment" programs that have been shown to distract students from learning key concepts.

Lexia Early Reading®,

Lexia Early Reading, designed for ages 4 to 6, provides exposure to phonological awareness, or the ability to reflect on and manipulate sounds in the language, which is essential to the acquisition of reading skills. These activities can be especially helpful to English second language students who may not be familiar with all of the sounds found in English.

Lexia Phonics Based Reading®,

Lexia Phonics Based Reading is an interactive reading skills program designed for students aged 5 to 8. It provides hundreds of exercises for practice in phonemic awareness, sound-symbol correspondence, word attack skills, and early comprehension skills, while introducing nearly 2,000 vocabulary words.

Visual Learning and Phonics Skills

Kidspiration®

Created for K-5 learners, Kidspiration® 2 provides an easy way to apply the proven principles of visual learning. Students build graphic organizers by combining pictures, text and spoken words to represent thoughts and information. Kidspiration is a product from Inspiration Software®, Inc. a recognized leader in visual thinking and learning and a partner of Lexia Learning Systems.

Fantastic Phonics®

Fantastic Phonics is a start-to-finish program of 60 phonetically controlled storybooks which teach children how to read using phonics. The product is based on national research which shows that the best outcomes are achieved with systematic instruction, using guided readers which are sequential and gently graded. Fantastic Phonics is a product from Momentum Multimedia: Early Reading Company, a leader in early reading.

Tenth Planet® Literacy Series

The Tenth Planet Literacy Series helps students become more fluent readers, better spellers, and more confident writers. By focusing on developing students' word-building and phonemic awareness skills, this series starts with an introduction to letter-sound relationships. Students discover patterns of letters and sounds, and finally work with larger units of meaning – manipulating and applying morphemes.

Each program contains six activities with three levels of inquiry that develop reading and language arts concepts and skills. Meaningful writing activities provide students with opportunities to apply learning. An extensive teacher's guide contains lesson plans and hands-on extension activities.

School District Technical Requirements

A minimum of two computers must be accessible in each classroom. Computers must have Internet access (128 Kbps or T1), a projection device, and a printer. Participants must have an established email account.

Academic and Professional Learning Credit

Successful completion of the **Educator Preparation for Achievement in Reading Professional Learning Program (E-Prep Program)** requires mastery of program objectives. Mastery verification is a requirement for participants seeking academic credit, Professional Learning Units (PLU), or Continuing Education Units (CEU).

Mastery verification for teachers is monitored and assessed by the E-Prep Course Leader and by the school administrator(s) through analytic rubric assessment of each of the course deliverables.

Mastery verification for school administrators is monitored and assessed by the E-Prep Program Course Leader through analytic rubric assessment of each of the course deliverables.

Certified educators who successfully complete the **Educator Preparation for Achievement in Reading Professional Learning Program** are eligible for academic credit and Reading Endorsement through Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia.

Frequently Asked Questions about E-Prep

Q1: What is E-Prep?

A: A year long professional development program for educators who teach reading to students in pre-kindergarten through the third grade. Modern teaching, learning, and assessment technologies are used to improve teaching and accelerate student learning. E-Prep students attend instructor-led workshops, learn from self-paced online materials, perform structured activities with students in their classrooms and discuss their learning with colleagues and the course leader in online forums.

Q2: What school systems will want to implement E-Prep?

A: Those looking to dramatically improve reading skill development in grades K-3, reaching for stellar yearly improvement, not just adequate yearly improvement.

Q3: Why does E-Prep work for teachers and students?

A: It gets results. It shows teachers how to use proven, research-based methods and tools to improve student reading performance. It helps teachers use data to inform instruction. It allows groups of teachers from the same school to reinforce and support each other's efforts.

Q4: Who participates in E-Prep?

A: In-service K-3 classroom teachers, reading specialists, media specialists, Title I teachers, early intervention specialists, ESOL and special education teachers, and their school leaders.

Q5: How much time is required of teachers participating in the E-Prep course?

A: The course includes 35 hours of instructor-led workshops over 5 days, 40 hours of self-paced online participation and 50 hours of classroom implementation throughout the year for a total of 125 contact hours.

Q6: What student gains can E-Prep school districts expect?

A: Students of E-Prep teachers perform better in reading in the year of course implementation, and in following years. In Georgia, students from a group of over 900 1st and 2nd graders in schools implementing the predecessor to E-Prep, the Reading Achievement Modules, showed statistically significant gains over a control group on the Georgia Criterion-Referenced Competency Test.

Q7: What technology elements are included in E-Prep?

A: Computer-based reading assessment and skill development programs from Lexia Learning Systems, online instructional material from Fantastic Phonics, concept and semantic mapping software from Kidspiration Software, the Tenth Planet

Literacy Series from Sunburst, and word processing, multimedia authoring, and spreadsheet software from Microsoft.

Q8: What are the hardware requirements for E-Prep?

A: High-speed Internet access, a computer lab for teacher workshops, two classroom workstations for student use and one for each E-Prep participant. See the “Technical Requirements Reference Guide” on p. 13 for details.

Q9: How much technology do teachers have to understand before beginning E-Prep?

A: Teachers need to know how to use a personal computer with a browser and the Microsoft Office applications: Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint.

Q10: Who leads the E-Prep courses?

A: Course leaders are educators selected by their school districts and trained by certified Reading Instructional Technology Specialists at the E-Prep Academy.

Q11: What is the E-Prep Academy?

A: The E-Prep Academy for Course Leaders is a 5-day training program that prepares educators to lead the E-Prep Program in schools or school districts. Prospective course leaders are taught how to deliver face-to-face instruction as well as how to monitor online instruction that will improve reading proficiency.

Q12: What are the prerequisites and requirements for prospective Course Leaders attending the E-Prep Academy?

A: Course Leaders must be experienced classroom teachers with an interest, experience and expertise in reading theory and practice. They spend 5 days at a certified E-Prep Academy some months before leading their first course. The Course Leader must have a minimum of a master’s degree in education to deliver the program for academic credit at an undergraduate level or for professional/staff development units.

Q13: Where has E-Prep already been delivered?

A: E-Prep was initially piloted in Forsyth County, GA and is currently in a controlled research pilot in Harris County, GA. Its predecessor, the Reading Achievement Modules (RAM), was delivered for three years in various sites in West Central Georgia.

Q14: Are there grants available for implementing E-Prep?

A: Yes, the E-Prep program qualifies for funding under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 under the following titles:

- Title I, Part A - Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
- Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 - Reading First
- Title II, Part A - Improving Teacher Quality
- Title II, Part D, Subpart 1 - Enhancing Education Through Technology

- Title V, Part A - Innovative Programs

About the Course Developers

Elizabeth Dudley Holmes

Beth Holmes is the Director of the Center for Quality Teaching and Learning at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia where she currently serves as the Program Coordinator for the College of Education's Undergraduate Reading Endorsement Program.

Beth is a Reading Specialist with extensive and diverse experience teaching reading and writing to children in the primary grades with honors including *Reading Teacher of the Year* and state recognition as an Honorary Life Member of the Georgia Congress of Parents and Teachers.

As a professional learning specialist, Beth has developed and delivered reading and technology integration programs for pre-service and in-service educators at local and state levels and for corporate industries including International Business Machines (IBM) and Lexia Learning Systems.

Beth has ten years of experience in educational administration with concentration on institutional redesign of curriculum and instruction emphasizing standards-based, data-driven teaching and improved student learning. Beth was a contributing member of the Writing Committee for the International Society for Technology in Education's National Educational Technology Standards and recently authored "Reading Achievement Module: The Role of Technology in Reading Instruction" which was published in *NewsWire* in January, 2004.

Tricia Wilson Cooling

Tricia Cooling is a Reading Instructional Technology Specialist for the Center for Quality Teaching and Learning at Columbus State University in Columbus, Georgia. Currently serving as the Lead Instructor for the College of Education's Undergraduate Reading Endorsement Program, Tricia coordinates reading professional development initiatives at school and district levels throughout Georgia.

Tricia has extensive experience in early childhood education, having spent 20 years teaching reading in the primary grades and five years as a primary school administrator in charge of curriculum and instruction. As an Elementary Curriculum Director in a large metropolitan school district, Tricia led the expansion of reading, mathematics, and technology integration programs in the elementary schools.

For five years Tricia's work has been dedicated to the professional development of pre-service and in-service teachers with specific emphasis on the uses of technology in reading and writing instruction. Recently, Tricia was invited to serve as a member of the Elementary Curriculum Delegation to the People's Republic of China, *People to People Ambassador Program*, during which she presented ideas for technology-enhanced, accelerated learning in reading and writing.

Correlations to Standards

E-Prep has been designed to meet national standards.

E-Prep is aligned to the **International Reading Association's Standards for Reading Professionals – Revised 2003**

E-Prep is grounded in the **National Reading Panel's** five critical areas of reading instruction: Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Fluency, Vocabulary Development, and Comprehension

E-Prep is aligned to the **International Society for Technology in Education National Educational Technology Standards (ISTE NETS) for Teachers**

E-Prep is responsive to the guidelines of the **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001** and qualifies for funding under the following titles:

- Title I, Part A, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
- Title I, Part B, Subpart 1 - Reading First
- Title II, Part A - Improving Teacher Quality
- Title II, Part D, Subpart 1 - Enhancing Education Through Technology
- Title V, Part A - Innovative Programs

E-Prep is designed based on ***scientifically researched, adult learner-centered principles for professional development.***

Reference documents available upon request:

A Correlation to the International Society of Technology In Education's National Educational Technology Standards (ISTE NETS) for Teachers – 9 pages

A Correlation to the International Reading Association's Standards for Reading Professionals, Revised 2003 - 12 pages