

Dear Barbara,

It's nice to hear from you again. California's experience has been that employers when surveyed about the quality of graduates of teacher preparation programs that have prepared elementary teachers to teach Reading, as documented by passing the Commission's RICA (Reading Instruction Competence Assessment) uniformly indicate that candidates have been well-prepared to teach all students well (including English learners and speakers of non-standard English). The Commission is an independent standards board that does not have authority over K-12 education, so the Commission itself has not carried out any specific research with regard to student test scores, and there are so many complex questions about causality of student test results and being able to tie those back specifically to coursework taken during teacher preparation. However, our instituting the RICA requirement and also requiring teacher preparation programs to provide focused coursework that prepares candidates to take this assessment has broad-based support because it is largely credited with improving the ability of candidates to teach Reading effectively.

We also hear from our teacher preparation programs that the RICA examination specifications (http://www.ctcexams.nesinc.com/PDF/RC_content_specs.pdf) are very helpful in designing the specific coursework that supports and prepares candidates to pass the assessment. Since we last communicated, the Commission is looking at updating the RICA Content Specifications to be more in alignment with the Common Core State Standards in reading and literacy. We have not yet scheduled this work, but we are looking at doing this in the near future. If it would be of interest to you to observe and/or participate in this work, we would be happy to have you attend.

For more specific information concerning the RICA examination, the teaching of reading, and documented outcomes, I would refer to you two primary architects of California's English Language Arts/English Language Development K-12 Frameworks, Nancy Brynelson and Hallie Yopp. I have copied them on this email so that if they have further information to provide you they can do that, or you can contact them directly. Nancy and Hallie have done an alignment study of our current RICA Content Specifications and Common Core principles and we are planning for them to be working with us when we update the RICA examination.

Best,

Phyllis