THE READING LEAGUE

Curriculum Navigation Report

University of Florida Literacy Institute's (UFLI) Foundations

UFLI FOUNDATIONS

2025 Publication
Reviewed with Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines (2nd Edition, 2023)

Introduction

CURRICULUM EVALUATION GUIDELINES DESCRIPTION

"Decisions regarding curriculum, instructional approaches, programs, and resources are critical and must be informed by more than experience, observations, or even belief systems. If we are to succeed in implementing effective practices, then we will need to embrace learning as a part of our work as much as teaching itself."

Hennessy, 2020, pg. 8.

Due to the popularity of the science of reading movement, the term "science of reading" has been used as a marketing tool, often promising a quick fix for decision makers seeking a program aligned with the scientific evidence base. However, as articulated in The Reading League's *Science of Reading: Defining Guide (2022)*,

> *The science of reading is a vast, interdisciplinary body of scientifically-based research about reading and issues related to reading and writing. Over the last five decades, this research has provided a preponderance of evidence to inform how proficient reading and writing develop; why some students have difficulty; and how educators can most effectively assess and teach, and, therefore, improve student outcomes through the prevention of and intervention for reading difficulties. (p.6)*

The Reading League's *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines (CEGs)* are a resource developed to assist consumers in making informed decisions when selecting curricula and instructional materials that best support evidence-aligned instruction grounded in the science of reading.

The CEGs are anchored by frameworks validated by the science of reading. Findings from the science of reading provide additional understandings that substantiate both aligned and non-aligned practices (AKA "red flags") within the CEGs. These serve as a foundation for what to expect from published curricula that claim to be aligned with the scientific evidence of how students learn to read. The CEGs highlight best practices that align with the science of reading. Red flags specify any non-aligned practices in the following areas:

- **Word Recognition**
- **Language Comprehension**
- **Reading Comprehension**
- **Writing**
- **Assessment**

The CEGs have been used by educators, building and district leaders, local education agencies, and state education agencies as a primary tool to find evidence of red flags, or practices that may interfere with the development of skilled reading. While the CEGs have been useful for schools and districts for informing curricular and instructional decision-making, The Reading League recognized the challenge of schoolbased teams that might not have the capacity for an in-depth review process. In the spirit of its mission to advance the awareness, understanding, and use of evidence-aligned reading instruction, expert review teams engaged in a large-scale review of the most widely-used curricula currently used in the United States in order to develop informative reports of each.

This report was generated after a review of the curriculum using the March 2023 *Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines*, which have been refined based on feedback, a lengthy pilot review, and have undergone an inter-rater reliability study with positive results. As you read through the findings of this report, remember that red flags will be present for all curricula as there is no perfect curriculum. The intent of this report is not to provide a recommendation, but rather to provide information to local education agencies to support their journey of selecting, using, and refining instruction and instructional materials to ensure they align with the science of reading.

Disclaimer: The Reading League's curriculum review is deemed an informational educational resource and should not be construed as sales pitches or product promotion. The purpose of the review is to further our mission to advance the understanding, awareness, and use of evidence-aligned reading instruction.

Curriculum Description

The evaluation on the following pages features the review of the University of Florida Literacy Institute's (UFLI) Foundations which is designed to teach foundational reading skills alongside a separate program that addresses language comprehension skills for students in the primary grades or to be used as an intervention for struggling learners.

For this report, reviewers closely examined the UFLI Foundations Manual and companion lesson materials made available for free on UFLI's website. The materials include lesson slide decks, decodable passages, homework sheets as well as games and activities for additional practice.

Reviewers were selected based on their deep knowledge of the science of reading and knowledge of high-quality instructional materials. Once selected, they were assigned to teams of at least three reviewers. The team met regularly to establish reliability in their individual scores and report their findings. For their review, each group member used The Reading League's Curriculum Reviewer Workbook to capture scores and evidence for their decisions. Individuals then looked for evidence of red flags within the curriculum materials, including scopes and sequences, modules/units, and lessons, as well as any ancillary Tier 1 curriculum materials (e.g., assessment documents). As each component was reviewed, individual reviewers also noted the extent to which a red flag statement was "true" and selected the appropriate rating in the Reviewer Workbook as outlined below.

1 Red Flag statement is False.

2 Red Flag statement is minimally True. Evidence is minimal or briefly mentioned.

3 Red Flag statement is mostly True. If applicable, evidence is in multiple places throughout the curriculum.

4 Red Flag statement is always True, pervasive, and/or integral to the curriculum.

A black box indicates that this component is not addressed in this curriculum, and must be addressed with other materials.

Reviewers used the notes section of each component to capture helpful evidence and notes, such as keywords that described a practice listed within the CEGs, specific examples, and precise locations of evidence, which are included in this narrative report.

For a more comprehensive description of the review process, visit The Reading League Compass's Curriculum Decision Makers page.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING WORD RECOGNITION

1A: Word Recognition Non-Negotiables

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

WORD RECOGNITION NON-NEGOTIABLES	SCORE
1.1: Three cueing-systems are taught as strategies for decoding in early grades (i.e., directing students to use picture cues, context cues, or attend to the first letter of a word as a cue).	1
1.2: Guidance to memorize any whole words, including high frequency words, by sight without attending to the sound/symbol correspondences.	1
1.3: Supporting materials do not provide a systematic scope and sequence nor opportunities for practice and review of elements taught (e.g., phonics, decoding, encoding).	1

UFLI's word recognition non-negotiables are "met." The review team found no evidence of the three-cueing system in any of the program's resources, including the introduction, background information, implementation guidance, or lessons. Furthermore, there was no evidence of whole word memorization, and the program's Manual offers educators an explanation of why NOT to teach students to memorize irregular words by sight, stating the following:

> Contrary to popular belief, students should not be taught to memorize most irregular words by sight. In most irregular words, only one or two letters do not conform to their usual sound correspondence. This means that most irregular words are at least partially decodable. Rather than relying on visual memorization, instruction in irregular words should promote students' orthographic mapping. (p. 31)

Teachers are offered explicit instructional routines for decoding both regular and irregular words. Decoding of regular words is featured in Steps 4–6 and 8 of the lesson plan, and teachers are guided to provide explicit instruction on decoding by teaching learners to attend to sound-spelling patterns. Decoding of irregular words occurs in Steps 7 and 8 of the lesson, and again, educators are provided with an explicit routine for identifying which letters do not follow their typical sound-spelling pattern in the targeted words. UFLI also provides educators with clear direction on how to teach irregularly spelled words through the Heart Word

method. This method emphasizes that children should use their knowledge of letter-sound correspondences to decode the regular word parts, using memorization only on the irregular parts within the words.

Finally, UFLI provides educators with a systematic scope and sequence for decoding instruction made available to all educators for free on their website. This scope and sequence is carefully designed to ensure students acquire foundational skills in a systematic and cumulative manner. The Manual provides an explanation of how the scope and sequence and review work within the program. The guide also offers suggested lesson sequences for kindergarten, first grade, and second grade (pp. 41-43). All lessons begin with a review of previously taught concepts and contain practice words including these concepts and/or current learning. Furthermore, the curriculum's authors emphasize providing instruction with "plentiful opportunities to respond (OTR)" and incorporating interleaved practice, as noted in the Background section of the Manual (p. 11).

1B: Phonological and Phoneme Awareness

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEME AWARENESS	SCORE	
1.7: Instruction only attends to larger units of phonological awareness (syllables, rhyme, onset-rime) without moving to the phoneme level (e.g., blends such as /t/ /r/ are kept intact rather than having students notice their individual sounds).	1	
1.8: Instruction is focused on letters only without explicit instruction and practice with the phonemes that letters represent.	1	
1.9: Phoneme awareness is not taught as a foundational reading skill.	1	
1.10: Phonological and phoneme awareness is not assessed or monitored.	2	

UFLI's **phonological and phonemic awareness** practices are **"mostly met."** Phoneme awareness is highlighted as a foundational reading skill and is Step 1 of the UFLI Foundations lesson plan. The Manual explains, "Effective instruction in foundational reading skills builds phonemic awareness. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in the spoken language...In UFLI Foundations lessons we include activities to build phonemic awareness, rather than phonological awareness" (p. 8). Thus, instruction consistently prioritizes work at the phoneme level. Students are provided with explicit instruction on how to blend and segment phonemes and engage in drills where they recognize and manipulate phonemes.

In the instructional sequence, students begin with the Getting Ready lessons, which are taught during the first two weeks of school, prior to the start of formal phonics instruction. During the Getting Ready lessons, students are introduced to the program's sound wall, the 44 phonemes of spoken English and grapheme formation with capital letters. Lessons 1–34 then systematically introduce both capital and lowercase letter names, the phonemes, articulatory gestures, voicing (e.g., voiced or unvoiced), sound type (e.g., continuous or stop), classification as vowel or consonant, and letter formation.

Phoneme awareness is monitored in each lesson through the lesson warmup. Teachers are guided to "ensure students are segmenting correctly" (UFLI Foundations Manual, p. 12). Teachers are also given implementation guidance to provide students with corrective feedback for Step 1 of the lesson plan.

Students use letter manipulatives and write during word work and sentence writing. These are explicitly described as formative assessment opportunities in the program's curricular materials. Furthermore, additional word work chains are provided for more practice and review to be utilized during the lesson and/or small group instruction. This provides teachers with increased formative assessment opportunities that assess phonemic awareness, decoding, and encoding. On page 354, the program also states, "Depending on where your students are in the scope and sequence, assessments can include any combination of the following types of items…" and goes on to list grapheme-phoneme correspondence, regular words, irregular words, and sentence dictation as methods. Unit spelling assessments are included in the curriculum. The spelling assessments in the back of the Manual include a set of point values to evaluate students' spelling skills, but the guidance on how to assign these point values is limited.

Finally, UFLI does not include a formal phonemic awareness (PA) assessment. However, the UFLI Manual states the following:

> An important element of phonemic awareness instruction is that, in addition to breaking down the sounds of spoken language, attention should be focused on mapping individual sounds to printed letters…Although phonemic awareness instruction can be accomplished without print, it tends to be more effective for both developing phonemic awareness and transferring to decoding and encoding skills when it includes letters. (p. 8)

Thus, the publisher clarified that the phonics and decoding assessments inherently assess phoneme awareness in the absence of targeted assessments. While opportunities for formative assessment of phonemic awareness are available in the whole group setting, the program lacks clear guidance on how to deliver them effectively.

1C: Phonics and Phonic Decoding

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR PHONICS AND PHONIC DECODING	SCORE
1.15: Letter-sound correspondences are taught opportunistically or implicitly during text reading.	1
1.16: Instruction is typically "one and done"; phonics skills are introduced but with very little or short-term review.	1
1.17: Key words for letter/sound correspondences are not aligned with the pure phoneme being taught (e.g., earth for /ĕ/, ant for /ă/, orange for /ŏ/).	1
1.18: Phonics instruction takes place in short (or optional) "mini-lessons" or "word work" sessions.	1
1.19: The initial instructional sequence introduces many (or all) consonants before a vowel is introduced, short vowels are all taught in rapid succession, and/or all sounds for one letter are taught all at once.	1
1.20: Blending is not explicitly taught nor practiced.	1
1.21: Instruction encourages students to memorize whole words, read using the first letter only as a clue, guess at words in context using a "What would make sense?" strategy, or use picture clues rather than phonic decoding.	1
1.22: Words with known sound-symbol correspondences, including high-frequency words, are taught as whole-word units, often as stand-alone "sight words" to be memorized.	1
1.23: Few opportunities for word-level decoding practice are provided.	1
1.24: Early texts are predominantly predictable and/or leveled texts which include phonic elements that have not been taught; decodable texts are not used or emphasized.	1
1.25: Advanced word study (Grades 2–5): Instruction in phonics ends once single syllable phonics patterns (e.g., CVC, CVCe) are taught.	1
1.26: Advanced word study (Grades 2–5): No instruction in multisyllabic word decoding strategies and/or using morphology to support word recognition is evident.	1

UFLI's **phonics and phonic decoding** practices are **"met."** Explicit instruction in phonemegrapheme relationships forms the cornerstone of this curriculum. It provides explicit instruction in letter-sound relationships using a carefully designed scope and sequence. All student work, including blending drills, word chains, and decodable texts, incorporates only the letter-sound correspondences taught up to that point.

The sound wall chart and materials include pictures associated with each letter-sound correspondence, though these are not the primary focus of instruction. Instead, lessons introducing letters use phrases such as the following script from Lesson 9: "The letter N can come at the beginning of a word such as the words nut and nod. N can also come at the end of a word, such as the words in and pin" (p. 78). UFLI's implementation guidance recommends using the curriculum in a 30 minute segment of a 90-minute reading block (p. 16). Furthermore, the curriculum advises that two lessons are taught each week, with each lesson divided into two parts (p. 17). Thus, students participate in focused, systematic instruction consistently.

The authors provide explicit guidelines to use for the introduction of letters within the scope and sequence, including the following:

- Teach high-frequency graphemes (e.g., S, M, A, SH) prior to less common graphemes (e.g., Q, Z, AUGH).
- Teach the most common phoneme associated with a grapheme before the les common sounds.
- Visually similar letters should be separated to reduce student confusion.
- Continuous sounds should be taught early on since these are easier to blend.
- Consonant sounds should be taught early on since most consonants represent one sound.
- Short vowels are more consistent and should be taught before long vowel sounds.
- Begin with simple combinations of vowels and consonants (VC and CVC) and move onto more complex ones (CVCC, CCVCC).

Blending is an essential part of each lesson and is included in multiple places during the review part of the lesson plan. After new concepts are introduced, students are given additional practice with blending during word work with manipulative letters and then in connected text. Some lessons offer guidance for educators, including cautions on blending challenges. For example, in Lesson 28, there is a specific note for teaching the /w/ sound, which states the following:

> Pay close attention to the pronunciation of the /w/. Although it is often treated as a stop sound and pronounced /wuh/, that pronunciation is very difficult to blend. Students will find it much easier to blend if the sound you model is continuous (as in the sound before the /i/ in the word 'wish'). (p. 116)˘

Memorization is not emphasized as a part of UFLI's programming, and students are given the opportunity to practice applying taught skills with both reading and spelling words in every lesson. Teachers are also encouraged to say each sound and then blend the sounds together when modeling. Further practice is provided during the word work lessons using manipulatives that support students noticing each phoneme before blending sounds together.

Step 7 of the core lesson plan, Irregular Words, includes words that cannot be decoded because the pattern is unique to that word or it is a high-frequency word that students have not yet learned. The program explains, "The Dolch & Fry words listed on each lesson include both irregular words that have been explicitly introduced and regular words that students should be able to decode based on scope and sequence" (p. 22). Both regular and irregular words are taught using phonic decoding. In the Implementation Guidance section, authors specifically state that words are not to be taught by sight, and instead of relying upon memorization, "instruction in irregular words should promote students' orthographic mapping" (p. 31).

Starting in Lesson 5, students engage in word-level decoding practice in every lesson. Two of the 8 steps within the core lesson plan are devoted to word-level decoding: Step 4, the Blending Drill, and the reading portion of Step 5, where new concepts are introduced. The word work chain activity included in each lesson focuses on decoding. UFLI includes the use of other activities, including Elkonin boxes and the Pound and Sound phoneme segmentation strategies as well as grapheme manipulatives to support decoding and encoding work. Additionally, the program provides explicit guidance for educators on how to teach students to decode longer words, including a strong emphasis on instruction that focuses on syllable types, their division, and morphemic analysis. This is designed to help students develop the mental flexibility needed when decoding.

UFLI instructs that connected text should be part of all phonics instruction explaining that, "Decodable books and passages should be based on a scope and sequence of skills and be carefully sequenced to include mostly words that are consistent with the grapheme-phoneme correspondences that have been taught so far" (p. 10). As such, beginning with Lesson 8, decodable passages are included in the online resources with each lesson. The passages become progressively more challenging as the phonics patterns grow more complex with each lesson. Texts are not leveled or predictable; instead, passages are designed to reinforce phonics concepts in a tightly controlled manner.

The UFLI curriculum includes teaching skills beyond single syllable phonics patterns. Open and closed syllables are taught at the end of kindergarten as per the suggested scope and sequence. Students in Grades 1–2 are thereafter given opportunities to decode and encode single syllable and multisyllabic words. Morphology is not part of the kindergarten instruction and is introduced in the Grade 1 scope and sequence to develop basic understanding of the morphemes introduced and to read and spell words with the targeted morpheme. Lessons 63–65 introduce -ed and -ing, while instruction of the remaining 24 affixes begins at Lesson 99. This includes work with suffixes and prefixes (e.g., -s/-es, -er/-est, -ly, un-, etc.), suffix spelling changes (e.g., doubling rule -ed, -ing, doubling rule -er, -est, etc.) and additional affixes (e.g., -sion, -tion, -ture, -ish, etc.).

One area the team noted for improvement is enhancing UFLI's opportunities for review.

Reviewers identified an additional 10 review lessons within the 128 core lesson plans; however, these specific lessons are left to teacher discretion. Steps 1–4 of the core lesson plan focus on a review of previously taught concepts and the suggested lesson pacing offered is "a lesson across two days, with two lessons per week" (p. 17). It is recommended that Steps 1–5 (Phonemic Awareness, Visual Drill, Auditory Drill, Blending Drill, and New Concept) be covered on Day 1 of the lesson rotation, with Day 2 beginning with a quick review of Step 5 before proceeding to Steps 6–8. This pacing limits student practice with new concepts before advancing, even with the brief, built-in reviews.

While phonics instruction is never "one and done," and phonics patterns are typically practiced as a general intention of the program, the reviewers found some evidence of this flag in atypical lessons. For example, Lesson 72 introduces five different patterns that follow the same principle. The subsequent review, within Lesson 73, includes only six words that follow these patterns in the blending drill. Lesson 74 includes none, Lesson 75 includes seven words, and Lessons 76–77 include none. Furthermore, a review of corresponding decodable texts highlighted that phonics patterns featured in Lesson 72 were not evident in Lessons 7377. As such, UFLI would benefit from providing students with increased opportunities for more varied and frequent practice with targeted phonics patterns.

1D: Fluency

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR FLUENCY	SCORE	
1.40: Fluency instruction focuses primarily on student silent reading.	1	
1.41: Rate is emphasized over accuracy; priority is given to the student's ability to read words quickly.	1	
1.42: Word-level fluency practice to automaticity is not provided, or fluency is viewed only as text-reading fluency.	1	
1.43: Fluency is practiced only in narrative text or with repeated readings of patterned text.	2	
1.44: Fluency assessment allows acceptance of incorrectly decoded words if they are close in meaning to the target word (e.g., assessment based upon the cueing systems, M/S/V).	n/a	

UFLI's **fluency** practices are **"mostly met."** Fluency practice is included as a part of the core lesson plan's Step 8, Connected Text. The instructor's manual specifies that this portion of Step 8 "is to develop the student's word-level automaticity, text-level automaticity, and prosody, while maintaining a high degree of accuracy" (p. 33). Fluency instruction is not explicitly outlined in the Manual, but the publisher clarified that the Manual supports the description of automaticity and accuracy as the focus of fluency instruction. Automatic word reading with opportunities for practice in sentences is present when students chorally read a given sentence, "reading one portion of a sentence at a time, and then rereading what [they've]e read so far" (p. 32). The option to have students read the sentence to a partner is provided. The Manual also specifies a gradual release model for decodable texts to ensure students build confidence and independence with reading. Echo reading, partner reading, and choral reading are encouraged. UFLI addresses both accuracy and automaticity as critical to developing proficient reading (p. 10). While reading rate is not mentioned, automaticity in word reading is mentioned numerous times in the implementation guidance section.

Students have the opportunity to develop word-level fluency during Step 5, New Concept and Step 6, Word Work in the core lesson plan. In fact, lessons are primarily focused on word-level and sentence-level accuracy. Students are offered far fewer opportunities to practice with connected text, since the typical core lesson plan tasks students with reading three to four sentences and the decodable text available in Step 8 of the lesson. The majority of decodable passages feature narrative text, though some informational text is offered, like the "Gold Rush" passage with Lesson 72. No information for fluency instruction using the decodable text is provided outside of the directive for teachers to "use a range of strategies for reading the decodable text," including echo,

partner, and choral reading (p.33). UFLI also suggests that "students can read the same books or passages repeatedly—at school or at home—for additional practice," which provides minimal structure and guidance for the implementation of decodable text practice. Connected text examples also vary greatly. For instance, kindergarten texts repeat sentence patterns, like in the decodable stories "The Cat Can" and "I See." Here students are tasked to read sentences like the following:

- Can Cam fit on the cot? Cam can not fit on the cot. Can cat fit on the cot? Cat cat fit on the cot. The cat can nap on the cot. Cam can not nap on the cot. Cam can nap on the mat.
- I see a pig. The pig is in its pen. I see a cat. The cat is on the bed. I see a dog. The dog is in its den. I see a bug. The bug is on a bat!

After the review, the publisher clarified that one of the reasons for these repeated sentences is because there are very few decodable words at this point of instruction, so repeated sentence patterns are likely needed in order to construct a logical and engaging story.

Finally, while fluency assessments are not included in the curriculum currently published, draft documents have been added to UFLI's website for educator use. These documents were not included in this review.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING

SECTIONS 2–4: Non-Negotiables for Language Comprehension, Reading Comprehension, and Writing

This section begins with a review of non-negotiable elements for language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing before moving on to the language comprehension strands highlighted in Scarborough's reading rope. Therefore, identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION, READING COMPREHENSION, AND WRITING	SCORE
2-4.1: (LC, RC, W) In early grades, the instructional framework is primarily a workshop approach, emphasizing student choice and implicit, incidental, or embedded learning.	1
2-4.2: (LC, RC, W) Students are not exposed to rich vocabulary and complex syntax in reading and writing materials.	n/a
2-4.3: (RC) Comprehension activities focus mainly on assessing whether students understand content (the product of comprehension) instead of supporting the process of comprehending texts.	3
2-4.4: (RC, W) Writing is not taught or is taught separately from reading at all times.	n/a
2-4.5: (LC, RC) Questioning during read-alouds focuses mainly on lower-level thinking skills.	n/a

UFLI's non-negotiables for **language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing** are **"somewhat met."** The review team found that UFLI uses an overall explicit approach to instruction. Guidance for educators as provided in the Manual (2022) states,

> UFLI Foundations lessons incorporate modeling and demonstration (I do.), guided practice (We do.), and independent practice (You do.). It is important to use consistent verbal and non-verbal (e.g., hand signals) prompts to communicate expectations for participation during each of these activities. (p. 19)

The curriculum features systematic instruction that follows a carefully designed scope and sequence. Every lesson is structured in a predictable manner, with no student choice and only explicit, direct instruction, which "is clear, direct, and unambiguous. It includes frequent checks for understanding, never assuming mastery, and never leaving learning to chance" (p. 11). However, the curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, specifically stating that "UFLI Foundations is designed to address the "D" side of the [simple view of reading] equation" (p. 7).

However, UFLI's implementation guidance refers to the use of "basic comprehension strategies," leaving the specifics of comprehension instruction up to the teachers. This ambiguous guidance lacks clarity as to how to incorporate comprehension strategies into lessons.

The texts provided by UFLI Foundations are appropriate decodable texts for applying phonics skills that have been taught and offering practice to further develop foundational skills. Since these texts are designed to help students master the code, rich vocabulary and syntax are not evident as that is not the focus of the curriculum. Because of the use of tightly controlled phonemes featured in each lesson, decodable texts mostly use single syllable words, and there is no guidance for teaching unknown vocabulary. Thus, it will be necessary for schools to provide content to teach vocabulary and language.

Within the program, there are some more advanced vocabulary terms, but without teacher instruction in the meaning of these words, they may hinder student comprehension. For example, words and phrases like "welt" (Lesson 40a), "the craft is a crest" (Lesson 41c), "lodge at the edge of a glen" (Lesson 70), and "spirited" (Lesson 95) are likely beyond the language comprehension of students in Grades K–2, making it challenging for them to grasp their meaning without further explanation.

- Lesson 37a: "Mom and Dad went for a jog. Mom and Dad got hot. Is the fan on?"
- Lesson 45: "Look at the ship. Trish and Josh jump on the ship deck. Trish has a net to get fish. Josh has a bag to get shells."
- Lesson 53: "Quin and Jax look for ships that could go to the dock. 'I think that tall black ship will go to the dock,' said Quin. 'I think this big pink ship will go to the dock,' said Jax."
- Lesson 64: "One time, Will and his pod of whales ended up in a cove. The cove was filled with fish and shrimp. The fish swam in the waves. The shrimp drifted in the tides."

Students do not encounter more complex syntax until Grade 2, Lesson 116. Some morphology work is introduced beginning at Lesson 99, offering students some opportunities for vocabulary instruction; however, this is not the explicit focus of the lessons.

The review team observed no evidence of assessing students' understanding of the content or support for the process of comprehending texts. Educators are instructed that decodable passages are used "for the purpose of developing fluency and comprehension. This component emphasizes the development of word-level and text-level automaticity and it can be an opportunity to introduce basic comprehension strategies" (p. 33). However, there are no suggested comprehension strategies provided, and many of the passages require a great deal of inferring (e.g., Lessons 39a, 40, 40b, 41b, 41c, 95) or are nonsensical (e.g., Lessons 10, 11, 12, 19, 20, 22).

Explicit instruction and practice in letter formation is provided, but the program was designed so that writing instruction does not go beyond this. Writing only includes transcription of dictated words (within Step 5) and sentences (with Step 8). Reviewers noted that there is no guidance on the correct use of capitals or punctuation, nor protocol to offer feedback on these elements, even when complex sentences are introduced in Lesson 116. While writing activities are included, direct instruction on writing conventions is lacking. Adopters of this curriculum must be aware of these limitations to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support students' language comprehension, reading comprehension, and writing development.

2B: Background Knowledge

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE	SCORE
2.1: Read-aloud opportunities emphasize simple stories or narrative texts. Read-aloud text is not sufficiently complex and/or does not include knowledge-building expository texts (i.e., topics related to science, social studies, current events).	n/a
2.2: Opportunities to bridge existing knowledge to new knowledge is not apparent in instruction.	n/a
2.3: Advanced (Grades 2–5): For students who are automatic with the code, texts for reading are primarily leveled texts that do not feature a variety of diverse, complex, knowledge-building text sets to develop background knowledge in a variety of subject areas.	n/a

UFLI's practices for **background knowledge** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, specifically stating that, "UFLI Foundations is designed to address the "D" side of the [simple view of reading] equation" (p. 7). The decodable texts provided are appropriate for applying targeted phonics skills and offering students practice to develop these foundational skills further. As such, included texts are designed to help students master the code. While the curriculum offers students opportunities to connect to previous learning, these are limited to phonics concepts that have been taught. Adopters of this curriculum must be aware of these limitations to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support the development of students' background knowledge.

2C: Vocabulary

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR VOCABULARY	SCORE
2.7: Vocabulary worksheets and activities are used with little opportunity for deep understanding of vocabulary words.	n/a
2.8: Instruction includes memorization of isolated words and definitions out of context.	n/a
2.9: Tier 2 words are not taught explicitly and practiced; students are not given opportunities to use them in their speech, see them in print, and use them in writing.	2
2.10: Students are not exposed to and taught Tier 3 words.	n/a
2.11: Explicit instruction in morphology is not present and/or not taught according to a scope and sequence (i.e., simple to complex) consistently throughout K–5 instruction.	2

UFLI's practices for **vocabulary** are **"somewhat met."** The curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, specifically stating that "UFLI Foundations is designed to address the "D" side of the [simple view of reading] equation" (p. 7). Work with morphology is included, but the program was designed so that it focuses on its relationship to decoding and encoding and not building deep knowledge of words. Morphology is not part of kindergarten instruction and is introduced late in the Grade 1 scope and sequence. Again, the primary goal of these lessons is to develop a basic understanding of the morphemes introduced and to read and spell words with the targeted morpheme. Lessons 63–65 introduce -ed and -ing, while instruction of the remaining 24 affixes begins at Lesson 99. This includes work with suffixes and prefixes (e.g., -s, -es, -ly, un-, etc.), suffix spelling changes (e.g., doubling rule for -ed, -ing, -er, -est, etc.) and additional affixes (e.g., -sion, -tion, -ture, -ish, etc.). The Word Work routine shifts to incorporate more morpheme-focused activities in later lessons. For example, in Lessons 100–101, students are asked to "orally generate sentences that use the words in context." Then in Lessons 102, 103, and 105, educators are instructed to "build each word and orally generate a definition.

Then discuss how the meaning of the word changes when the suffix is added." Additional activities involve sorting words based on targeted morpheme meanings (e.g., Lessons 99, 104, and 12), using affixes to define unknown words (e.g., Lessons 126 and 127), and creating and defining new words with targeted suffixes (e.g., Lessons 122 and 125).

The curriculum mentions discussing connections to word meaning and prompts educators to "discuss how suffixes change word meanings as you read and spell" (p. 280). However, this could be deepened to support learners in making meaningful connections between word structure and comprehension. Adopters of this curriculum must be aware of these limitations to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support the development of students' vocabulary knowledge.

Tier 2 words are present as decodable words (e.g., gash, gush, sash, snuff, vite, vice, vane, pane, sham, tine). These words are selected for decoding practice; however, the meanings are not explained in the Manual or in the decodables. Lessons do not provide teacher guidance on vocabulary instruction or helping students understand meanings of words, nor do they provide teachers with definitions to reference during the lessons. It is up to the teachers' discretion to determine if class time will be leveraged to seek and provide these meanings in order to support students' comprehension of the text they are reading.

2D: Language Structures

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR LANGUAGE STRUCTURES	SCORE
2.18: Conventions of print, grammar, and syntax are taught implicitly or opportunistically with no evidence of consistent, explicit, simple to complex instruction across all grade levels.	2
2.19: Instruction does not include teacher modeling nor sufficient opportunities for discussion.	n/a
2.20: Students are asked to memorize parts of speech as a list without learning in context and through application.	1

UFLI's practices for **language structures** are **"somewhat met."** The curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, specifically stating that "UFLI Foundations is designed to address the "D" side of the [simple view of reading] equation" (p. 7). As such, practices regarding language structures were limited. The team observed no evidence of memorization of the parts of speech. Connections to grammar are briefly touched on when students are asked to name the part of speech in Grade 2 affix lessons; however, this features a surface level approach. For example, in Lesson 63, the Manual states, "The -s ending is used to make nouns plural. Plural means more than one: one cat, three cats. The -s ending can also change the tense of verbs: I run, he runs" (p. 204). This surface level instruction continues within Lessons 99–106, which focus on suffixes and prefixes. Here, students are taught how adding affixes can change the meaning of the word, but the main focus of instruction is on pronunciation and accurate decoding. Furthermore, use of punctuation and capitalization are briefly mentioned in the description of Step 8, Connected Text; however, educator guidance is again limited. Students also use the CAPS strategy (Capitalization, All sentences make sense, Punctuation, and Spelling) as a way to edit and check their work for correct capitalization and punctuation.

Reviewers could not locate guidance about how or when to provide direct instruction on the conventions of print. For example, the connected text portion of Lesson 10 includes statements, exclamations, and proper nouns, but provides no teacher guidance on how to introduce these concepts (p. 81). The question mark is used in Lesson 12 with no introduction; by Lesson 30, connected text includes speaker dialogue punctuated with quotation marks, but again, there is no evidence of direct instruction to accompany this concept. Furthermore, the team observed limited instruction of print awareness, which was primarily addressed through letter-sound correspondences, letter formation, and spacing, with no guidance for educators on how to instruct on directionality of print. Additionally, in the Manual it states, "To encourage self monitoring during writing, you can guide

students in using an error monitoring strategy. The strategy employs the mnemonic CAPS to remind students to read the sentence four times, checking one element each time." Prior to that, the Manual states that each sentence should demonstrate correct spelling and punctuation.

Students are also asked to read a variety of sentences (e.g., exclamatory, declarative, imperative, interrogative) and write sentences that they monitor with CAPS, but there is no instruction in usage of specific punctuation for sentence types. This is by design; however, in the absence of an additional program, students will not receive this instruction and, therefore, will not be successful with these tasks. As such, adopters of this curriculum must be aware of these limitations to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support the development of students' knowledge of the conventions of print, grammar, and syntax.

2E: Verbal Reasoning

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR VERBAL REASONING	SCORE
2.26: Inferencing strategies are not taught explicitly and may be based only on picture clues and not text (i.e., picture walking).	n/a
2.27: Students do not practice inference as a discrete skill.	n/a

UFLI's practices for **verbal reasoning** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, specifically stating that "UFLI Foundations is designed to address the "D" side of the [simple view of reading] equation" (p. 7). Consequently, inferencing strategies are not taught as a part of this curriculum. This was noted as a missed opportunity, as many of the decodable passages require a great deal of inferring (e.g., Lessons 39a, 40, 40b, 41b, 41c, 95). However, pictures and images are not provided with the connected text, so picture clues are not possible when using the curriculum's passages. Adopters of this curriculum must be aware of these limitations to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support the development of students' verbal reasoning abilities.

2F: Literacy Knowledge

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR LITERACY KNOWLEDGE	SCORE
2.33: Genre types and features are not explicitly taught.	n/a
2.34: Genre-specific text structures and corresponding signal words are not explicitly taught and practiced.	n/a

UFLI's practices for **literacy knowledge** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, specifically stating that "UFLI Foundations is designed to address the "D" side of the [simple view of reading] equation" (p. 7). As a result, genre, text structure, and their corresponding features are not explicitly taught. Adopters of this curriculum must be aware of these limitations to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support the development of students' literacy knowledge.

Section 3: Reading Comprehension

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR READING COMPREHENSION	SCORE
3.1: Students are asked to independently read texts they are unable to decode with accuracy in order to practice reading comprehension strategies (e.g., making inferences, predicting, summarizing, visualizing).	n/a
3.2: Students are asked to independently apply reading comprehension strategies primarily in short, disconnected readings at the expense of engaging in knowledge-building text sets.	n/a
3.3: Emphasis is on independent reading and book choice without engaging with complex texts.	n/a
3.4: Materials for comprehension instruction are predominantly predictable and/or leveled texts.	n/a
3.5: Students are not taught methods to monitor their comprehension while reading.	n/a

UFLI's practices for **reading comprehension** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, specifically stating that "UFLI Foundations is designed to address the "D" side of the [simple view of reading] equation" (p. 7). The curriculum specifies the use of a gradual release model for decodable texts, with the use of echo, partner, and choral reading recommended. Students are not asked to independently read texts, nor are they offered comprehension strategies. Adopters of this curriculum must be aware of these limitations to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support the development of reading comprehension.

4A: Writing — Handwriting

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR HANDWRITING	SCORE
4.1: No direct instruction in handwriting.	1
4.2: Handwriting instruction is an isolated add-on.	1

UFLI's practices for **handwriting** are **"met"** and handwriting is a core component of instruction. The Getting Ready lessons, which occur during the first two weeks of school, introduce learners to the necessary handwriting strokes (e.g., vertical lines, diagonal lines, curves) and then move on to capital letter formation. These lessons also include skywriting and tracing. The Getting Ready lessons observe the following progression:

- Lesson A: Circles and curves
- Lesson B: Vertical lines, horizontal lines, and slanted lines
- Lesson C: Uppercase L, F, and E
- Lesson D: Introduces the use of pencils or markers as well as uppercase H, T, and I
- Lesson E: Uppercase O, Q, C, and G
- Lesson F: Uppercase U, J, and S
- Lesson G: Uppercase D, P, B, and R
- Lesson H: Uppercase K, M, N, and A
- Lesson I: Uppercase V, W, and X
- Lesson J: Uppercase Y and Z

After this, letter formation of lowercase letters is explained in the Step 5, New Concept portion of the lesson plan when letters are formally introduced. Almost all Lessons 1 through 37 include a letter formation section with explicit instructions for teachers provided. The Manual directs teachers to introduce the letter's formation, including "where to begin, which direction to move, and where to end" the letter (p. 28), but posture and grip are not addressed. Educators are directed to provide practice opportunities matched to students' age and fine motor abilities, allowing for differentiation

based on individual needs; however, the curriculum offers no further guidance on this. Lesson 38 and beyond include letter formation as needed. This directive is provided as a reminder in Step 5 of the core lesson plan until Lesson 98. Teachers are also offered letter formation guidance in the curriculum's resources located on pages 367–368 of the Manual.

Implementation guidance for letter formation states, "Letter formation practice can be accomplished with dry erase boards and markers, pencils and paper, fingers on the table or carpet, or skywriting" (p. 28). Additional writing supports can be found in the Teacher Resource Hub.

4B: Writing — Spelling

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR SPELLING	SCORE	
4.7: No evidence of explicit spelling instruction; no spelling scope and sequence, or the spelling scope and sequence is not aligned with the phonics / decoding scope and sequence.	1	
4.8: No evidence of phoneme segmentation and/or phoneme-grapheme mapping to support spelling instruction.	1	
4.9: Patterns in decoding are not featured in encoding/spelling; spelling lists are based on content or frequency of word use and not connected to decoding/phonics lessons.	1	
4.10: Students practice spelling by memorization only (e.g., rainbow writing, repeated writing, pyramid writing).	1	
4.11: Spelling patterns for each phoneme are taught all at once (e.g., all spellings of long /ā/) instead of a systematic progression to develop automaticity with individual graphemes/phonemes.	2	

UFLI's practices for **spelling** are **"mostly met."** Reviewers found evidence of explicit spelling instruction aligned to the decoding scope and sequence. The curriculum is designed to strengthen the connection between phonemes and graphemes by reinforcing their associated spelling patterns. The Manual explains that

> when introducing grapheme-phoneme correspondences, it's important to teach the possible placement of the grapheme in a word. Practice reading and spelling words using the newly learned correspondence helps students commit the connection to memory. (p. 14)

As such, instruction focused on phoneme-grapheme correspondences is included in each lesson, and students do not practice spelling words independently unless a spelling assessment is administered. These are provided for each lesson beginning on page 355 of the Manual. The reading and spelling of both regular and irregular words are part of the Step 6, Word Work portion and Step 7, Irregular Words portion of the core lesson plan. Students are introduced to the full Word Work routine in Lesson 5, which includes explicit directions for the "I do" and "We do" portions of the lesson. The "You do" portion, however, is not included.

The importance of phoneme-grapheme mapping is explained as follows: "An important element of phonemic awareness instruction is that, in addition to breaking down the sounds of spoken language, attention should be focused on mapping individual sounds to printed letters" (p. 8). Phonemic awareness is further supported through the use of a sound wall to aid students' letter-sound memory. In Step 6, the Word Work portion of the lesson plan, word chaining is taught. During this activity students add on, delete, or swap letters to represent the sounds as they are stated (e.g., drop→crop→prop→prod).

As mentioned previously, UFLI does not emphasize student memorization, explaining that

> memorizing a list of 10–20 words requires very different (and much less useful) skills than learning how to apply a set of grapheme-phoneme correspondences. Rather than send home a list of specific words for children to memorize...we suggest that you send home sounds and patterns for students to practice after you have introduced each concept. (p. 354)

UFLI's materials provide students with opportunities for "decoding words, analyzing word parts, and writing and recognizing words" (pp. 14–15). This is reinforced during the Word Work portion of the lesson plan where students learn spelling patterns.

Finally, the team noted some evidence of multiple spelling patterns being taught all at once, especially as the lessons progress in complexity. Some examples include the following:

- Lesson 43: -all, -oll, and -ull (p. 164)
- Lesson 58: /ū/ and /yū/ (p. 194)
- Lesson 62: silent e exceptions (p. 202)
- Lesson 72: -ild, -old, -ind, -olt, and -ost (p. 224)
- Lesson 84: ai and ay (p. 248)
- Lesson 85: ee, ea, and ey (p. 250)
- Lesson 86: oa, ow, and oe (p. 252)

4C: Writing — Composition

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR COMPOSITION	SCORE
4.17: Writing prompts are provided with little time for modeling, planning, and brainstorming ideas.	n/a
4.18: Writing is primarily unstructured with few models or graphic organizers.	n/a
4.19: Conventions, grammar, and sentence structure are not explicitly taught and practiced systematically (i.e., from simple to complex) with opportunities for practice to automaticity; instead they are taught implicitly or opportunistically.	n/a
4.20: Writing instruction is primarily narrative or unstructured choice.	n/a
4.21: Students are not taught the writing process (e.g., planning, revising, editing).	n/a
4.22: Writing is taught as a standalone and is not used to further reading comprehension.	n/a

UFLI's practices for **composition** are **"not applicable."** The curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, specifically stating that "UFLI Foundations is designed to address the "D" side of the [simple view of reading] equation" (p. 7). Adopters of this curriculum must be aware of this limitation to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support the development of written composition.

Findings:

COMPONENTS SUPPORTING ASSESSMENT

SECTION 5: Assessment

Identification of the following red flag practices were prioritized in the review of this section.

NON-NEGOTIABLES FOR ASSESSMENT	SCORE
5.1: Assessments measure comprehension only without additional assessment measures to determine what is leading to comprehension weaknesses (e.g., phonics, phoneme awareness, nonsense word fluency, decoding, encoding, fluency, vocabulary, listening comprehension).	n/a
5.2: Assessments include miscue analysis in which misread words that have the same meaning are marked as correct.	1

RED FLAG PRACTICES FOR ASSESSMENT	SCORE
5.6: Assessments result in benchmarks according to a leveled-text gradient.	n/a
5.7: Foundational skills assessments are primarily running records or similar assessments that are based on whole language or cueing strategies (e.g., read the word by looking at the first letter, use picture support for decoding).	1
5.8: Phonics skills are not assessed.	1
5.9: Phoneme awareness is not assessed.	2
5.10: Decoding skills are assessed using real words only.	n/a
5.11: Oral reading fluency (ORF) assessments are not used.	3
5.12: The suite of assessments does not address aspects of language comprehension (e.g., vocabulary, syntax, listening comprehension).	n/a
5.13: Multilingual learners are not assessed in their home language.	4

UFLI's non-negotiables and practices for **assessment** are **"somewhat met."** Since the curriculum is not designed to address language comprehension, reading comprehension, or writing development, comprehension is not assessed in this program. The only component assessed is spelling, and these measures are aligned to the scope and sequence for decoding and encoding. During this assessment, students are given 3 opportunities to spell words with the correct grapheme-phoneme correspondence, one short sentence that includes the phonics concept featured, as well irregular words that have been taught. These measures serve as formative progress monitoring assessments, and the curriculum's Manual recommends administering

> spelling tests weekly...that you can use to base your decisions about next week's small-group supplemental support. Use data from assessment of each concept to identify which children still need substantial support, who needs minimal support, and who has already mastered the concept. (p. 354)

Although phoneme awareness is not formally assessed, formative assessment opportunities exist in whole group scenarios only. Here, teachers are instructed to listen to choral responses to assess phoneme awareness and implement a corrective procedure. There is no option to assess phonemic awareness individually nor resources offered to measure these skills in a systematic manner. Like comprehension assessment, measures of decoding and fluency are not included in UFLI's Foundations curriculum. After the review, draft documents have been made available as an optional measure at the end of each unit starting with the first grade scope and sequence. Educators could also use external assessment tools, such as DIBELS or aimswebPLUS, to provide students with screening and progress monitoring in these areas. Educators would also need to look to outside assessment tools to ensure that multilingual learners are assessed in their home language. However, the team noted that this would most likely be the case with most core curricula programs.

Final Report Summary

Overall, the reviewed components for UFLI's Foundations curriculum were found to be "mostly met" for Grades K–2. This means there was minimal evidence of red flag practices. While an evidence-aligned core curriculum is a critical part of any literacy program, it is no substitute for building a solid foundation of educator and leader knowledge in the science of reading as well as a coaching system to support fidelity of implementation.

STRENGTHS

UFLI's curriculum and materials are highly aligned to the evidence regarding foundational skills. It provides a structured, systematic approach to ensure learners develop the necessary word recognition skills, including phonological and phonemic awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency.

UFLI's curriculum provides a well-structured scope and sequence, offering educators a clear roadmap of the skills to target across grade levels. This document also assists teachers in taking a diagnostic approach to assess and address their students' needs effectively.

UFLI's curriculum is easy to use, with built in routines that, once learned, provide a predictable structure for educators. Additionally, with all content in a single book, teachers have a solid reference to guide their teaching.

UFLI's resources are available online, making it cost-effective and minimizing the need for additional materials. The program's slide decks offer educators a ready to use resource which is both well created and editable.

UFLI's curriculum is designed to be educative, providing teachers with necessary background knowledge in the science of reading as well as instructional routines and strategies to support classroom instruction. From a coaching perspective, UFLI is relatively simple to train others on and is highly accessible for all users.

CHALLENGES

UFLI's curriculum does not include instruction of language comprehension, reading comprehension, or written composition. Adopters of this curriculum must be aware of this limitation to ensure they include supplementary resources and instructional strategies to fully support the development of these necessary components of skilled reading.

UFLI's curriculum would benefit from offering students more opportunities for student practice. Day 1 of the lesson plan includes an emphasis on teacher talk, and while Day 2 is slightly better and is more student focused, all learners would benefit from increased opportunities to practice and apply targeted skills.

Outside of spelling, UFLI's assessment practices were limited. While formative assessment opportunities for phonemic awareness exist in the whole group setting, there is no guidance to assess phonemic awareness individually nor opportunity to measure skills systematically with the resources included. In response to teacher feedback, UFLI is developing a series of unit assessments available on their website. However, these are draft documents, meaning that they have not yet been normed.

UFLI's curricular materials could be enhanced by incorporating activities and strategies that deepen students' understanding of word meanings. For instance, some of the words chosen to align with targeted phonics patterns may be ones with which students have limited exposure (e.g., 40a: "welt," 41c: "the craft is a crest," 70: "lodge at the edge of a glen," 95: "spirited"). Providing explicit connections to word meaning would help students expand their vocabulary and improve their comprehension of decodable texts. This also applies to inferring, as many of the decodable texts (e.g., Lessons 39a, 40, 40b, 41b, 41c, 95) require students to generate inferences.

UFLI's curriculum offers limited support for multilingual learners; therefore, additional strategies may be needed to ensure these students fully understand the material.

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PUBLISHER'S RESPONSE

Curriculum Navigation Report

University of Florida Literacy Institute's (UFLI) Foundations

Publisher's Response to the Reading League Review

The UFLI team thanks The Reading League for their in-depth review of *UFLI Foundations.* In this response, we will summarize and provide additional context for the review's findings.

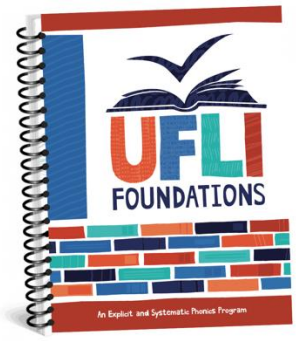
UFLI Foundations is an explicit and systematic phonics program developed by the University of Florida Literacy Institute, better known as UFLI. It is designed for core instruction in foundational skills for students in grades K-2. It can also be used as intervention for students in any grade who need support developing the skills addressed in the program's scope and sequence.

All criteria in the following areas were **met** or **mostly met:**

- ✓ word recognition
- ✓ phonics and decoding
- ✓ handwriting
- ✓ phonological and phonemic awareness
- ✓ fluency
- ✓ spelling

Reported Program Strengths

- High alignment to evidence regarding foundational reading skills
- A structured, systematic approach to ensure learners develop the necessary word recognition skills—phonological and phonemic awareness, decoding, sight recognition, and fluency—to successfully learn to read
- Well-structured scope and sequence
- Easy-to-use lesson plans with consistent routines
- Free resources available on the **UFLI Foundations Toolbox**
- An educative design that makes the program highly accessible to all users



Program Considerations

UFLI Foundations is a foundational reading skills program, not a comprehensive reading program. As noted in the review, *UFLI Foundations* provides some incidental opportunities for instruction in vocabulary, reading comprehension, and language structures, but these areas are not the focus of the program. That is, these opportunities are designed to support, not replace, dedicated instruction in those areas.

Likewise, the decodable passages included in the program are designed to practice new concepts in highly-controlled text. This is valuable practice but should not be students' only opportunity to interact with text. For the best outcomes, *UFLI Foundations* should be paired with other high-quality programs and resources that fully address language comprehension, knowledge building, and written expression skill development.

Assessment Clarifications

UFLI Foundations includes methods for assessing student progress for the sole purpose of informing future instruction. Every opportunity for students to respond throughout a UFLI lesson is an opportunity for progress monitoring. When students make mistakes during the lesson, educators are directed to provide immediate corrective feedback. Step-specific correction procedures are outlined in the manual.

Each week, concept uptake is monitored through a spelling assessment. These assessments are not designed to measure mastery and should not be used for grades or benchmark evaluation. Instead, data from these assessments should be used to plan supplemental small group instruction by determining which students need support with which concepts. Guidance for small group support is intentionally flexible to give educators the discretion to determine the type and quantity of support that would best meet the needs of their learners.

As explained in the report, educators will need to use additional assessments for screening and evaluating mastery of grade-level expectations. We agree that teacher-administered curriculum-based measures (e.g., DIBELS, Acadience) are excellent resources for this purpose.

Key Takeaway

UFLI Foundations is a research-based and evidence-based program for foundational reading skills instruction that is accessible to all teachers. The user-friendly manual makes it easy to learn how the program works. The predictable lesson routine, minimal preparation, and variety of free online resources make it easy to implement the program well.

Visit **ufliteracy.org/foundations** to learn more about *UFLI Foundations*.