Professional Development Institute

Flex Course Syllabus

Boosting Comprehension for Struggling Readers using Science of Reading (3-6)

PDI Course Number: 161T02

UCSD Course Number: EDUC42609

If you would like information about receiving post-baccalaureate (graduate) credit for completing this course, please click here.

Course Timeline

Participants have one year to complete the course. Participants must spend a minimum of three weeks in this course.

Course Description

Do you have struggling readers who are unsuccessful in their efforts to comprehend text they read? Do you want to understand how to harness the principles of the science of reading to help those students improve their comprehension skills? This online course takes a deep dive into a variety of best practices based on the science of reading to help teachers in grades 3-6 guide their students to greater comprehension. The course begins with an in-depth overview of the science of reading — what it is and how to effectively put the principles into practice in the classroom. Teachers will explore some of the common factors that often contribute to reading struggles, and they will learn how to best assess them using data-driven instructional practices. From there, teachers take a deep dive into evidence-based strategies to address many of these issues across all the "Big 5" components of reading — phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Teachers will explore how text structure and organization affect how a reader analyzes and interprets texts. They will also learn how to incorporate the 5W1H framework and Question/Answer Relationships (QARs) into their own teaching practices so that students become metacognitive, reflective thinkers. Along the way, teachers will learn how to incorporate these brain-based strategies into their explicit and systematic teaching so that students' comprehension soars and they become successful, active, metacognitive, lifelong

readers. By the end of this course, teachers will feel more confident in their quest to use best science of reading practices to help guide their struggling readers to greater comprehension.

Educational Outcomes

1. Teachers will understand the five key elements upon which the science of reading is based (phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension).
2. Teachers will learn about the Simple View of Reading and Scarborough's Reading Rope to describe the process of reading, and they will understand how the components of those models take form in the 3-6 classroom.
3. Teachers will take a deep dive into a variety of assessment options for assessing the five components of successful reading instruction (phonological awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension).
4. The teacher will understand the differences between phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics.
5. The teacher will explore several research-based strategies that are appropriate to grades 3-6 and are related to intervening phonemic awareness deficits across the continuum, especially as they relate to phoneme isolation, phoneme blending, phoneme segmentation, phoneme addition, phoneme deletion, and phoneme substitution.
6. Teachers will learn how to analyze students' phonics skills so that any deficits in grades 3-6 can be addressed explicitly and systematically.
7. Teachers will explore several letter-sound correspondence activities as well as decoding strategies at the 3-6 level.
8. Teachers will learn about the science behind multisensory instruction and how it relates to phonics intervention at the 3-6 level.
9. Teachers will explore ten phonics-based activities as they embrace the principles of multisensory instruction to combine listening, speaking, reading, and tactile or movement activities into their daily lessons.
10. Teachers will learn the difference between background knowledge and prior knowledge and how reading science supports both, thereby helping students achieve comprehension and advanced reading skills.
11. Teachers will learn a variety of strategies to support the teaching of facts and concepts to foster background knowledge.
12. Teachers will learn how reading science supports implementing real-life experiences so that students can further develop their background knowledge and comprehension skills.
13. Teachers will explore the complexities of word knowledge, including how the process of learning new vocabulary happens incrementally and over time (incrementality), knowing that words have many different forms (multidimensionality), knowing that words often have more than one meaning (polysemy), knowing that words are influenced by the context in which they are used (interrelatedness), and knowing how the meaning of words can differ, based on their function and structure (heterogeneity).
14. Teachers will be introduced to the three tiers of vocabulary, and they will learn specific strategies for closing the vocabulary gap.
15. Teachers will understand the relationship between fluency and comprehension, and they will explore several evidence-based strategies to help students in grades 3-6 further their

fluency skills, including tracking, recorded readings, audiobooks, and reader's theater, to name just a few.

16. Teachers will learn how to guide students to choose "just right" books, using research-based strategies such as the Five Finger Rule and the Goldilocks Method.

17. Teachers will understand the role that direct and explicit instruction play in reading comprehension and how the gradual release of responsibility model fits into the equation.

18. Teachers will be taken through Lucie Renard's step-by-step process, complete with evidence-based strategies, for embedding best direct and explicit instruction practices during lesson planning.

19. Teachers will understand the difference between literary and nonfiction text structures, and they will explore a variety of strategies to incorporate the explicit teaching of same into their practices to support their struggling readers' comprehension.

20. Teachers will understand the symbiotic relationship between word choice and comprehension, and they will explore a variety of ways to help students build better word choice, including the use of synonyms, mentor texts, organizers, and games, among others.

21. Teachers will learn about the different types of questions, and how those questions help readers to better comprehend what they are reading.

22. Teachers will explore a variety of strategies to aid students in asking questions while they read, including techniques such as the 5W1H framework, QAR relationships, the incorporation of mentor texts, and turning vocabulary into questions, among others.

23. Teachers will understand what literacy knowledge is, and they will understand how they work together to increase comprehension.

24. Teachers will learn how to guide their students to properly analyze and interpret text using the "I Do, We Do, You Do" approach, combined with explicit teaching and modeling, so that meaning is created.

25. Teachers will explore several active reading strategies, including making predictions, making connections (text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world), and identifying and summarizing key concepts as they engage with text before, during, and after reading.

26. Teachers will learn about the four ways in which instruction can be differentiated (through content, process, product, and learning environment) so that students have a concrete structure to work with each time they read.

27. Teachers will explore a variety of differentiation strategies across all four of the above domains (content, process, product, learning environment), all of which are based on science of reading best practices.

28. Teachers will learn how to use the "I Do, We Do, You Do" approach to scaffold instruction for better comprehension.

29. Teachers will explore several scaffolding approaches that they can use immediately in their classrooms.

30. Teachers will learn how differentiated instruction and scaffolding can be used within guided strategy groups to foster better comprehension.

Instructional Media

- Online Discussions
- Online Engagement

- Online Collaboration
- Instructor Feedback
- Instructor Interaction
- Online Resources and Websites
- Supplemental Instructional Materials
- Printable Classroom Resources

Evaluation

- Test #1 (5% of final grade)
- Test #2 (5% of final grade)
- Test #3 (5% of final grade)
- Test #4 (5% of final grade)
- Test #5 (5% of final grade)
- Autobiography and Goals for the Course (10% of final grade)
- Article/Video Reflection (15% of final grade)
- Course Collaboration/Share Ideas with the Class (10% of final grade)
- Cumulative Assignment/Project: Create an Intervention Plan (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

Topical Outline

Unit One

- Understanding the Science of Reading
- The Science of Reading in the 3-6 Classroom
- Assessing Reading Difficulties in the 3-6 Classroom
- **Assignment #1**
  Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about helping struggling readers increase their comprehension in grades 3-6 using best science of reading practices. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.
- **Test #1**

Unit Two

- Attacking Phonemic Awareness Deficits with the Science of Reading
- The Importance of Systematic Phonics Instruction
- Multisensory Phonics Instruction
- **Assignment #2**
  As an educator, it is important to be aware of the research, studies, and professional work done in the field. In the course, you will find an article and video that are relevant

to the specific course content. Read the article and then write an essay with your thoughts.

- **Test #2**

Unit Three

- Building Background Knowledge with Reading Science
- Strategies to Teach Facts and Concepts
- Relying on Real-Life Experiences
- **Assignment #3**
Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to helping struggling readers increase their comprehension in grades 3-6 using best science of reading practices. The tip, strategy, or idea that you share needs to make a difference to other teachers in their own classrooms. Your assignment should be a minimum of three paragraphs and detailed enough for another teacher to follow easily. This is a great opportunity to share and collaborate with other teachers at your grade level around the country. Take time to review and respond to other postings that are relevant to your classroom population in order to gain effective ideas to use immediately in your classroom.
- **Test #3**

Unit Four

- The Complexity of Word Knowledge
- Understanding Reading Fluency
- The Role of Direct and Explicit Instruction in Reading Science
- **Test #4**

Unit Five

- Understanding Text Structure and Organization
- How Word Choice Develops Meaning
- Questioning Strategies
- **Test #5**

Unit Six

- The Importance of Literacy Knowledge
- Guiding Students to Become Active Readers through Explicit Comprehension Instruction
- Differentiating and Scaffolding Support
- **Assignment #4**
Create a detailed intervention plan for one of the students discussed in the fictional scenario contained in Assignment 4. Your plan should consist of at least three detailed paragraphs, beginning with what you believe to be the root cause of the chosen student's reading difficulties. The next paragraph should focus on one specific reading deficit

(there are many for each fictional student). Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your claim. The last paragraph should consist of a detailed step-by-step description of an activity that can be immediately implemented by the teacher to help this fictional student address this particular concern. It should be clear that your intervention plan follows best science of reading practices. Be sure to specify the specific strand of Scarborough's Reading Rope to which the intervention is meant to address. Follow the example given in Assignment 4 to obtain full credit.

- **Assignment #5**
The culminating practicum is a three-step process. (1) In the first assignment, you were asked what goals you had and what you hoped to learn from the course. Think back to your original goals for this course. Write a minimum two-paragraph reflection specifically describing how what you learned can be used to help you reach those goal(s). (2) Next, write a minimum three-paragraph plan that specifically describes the ways in which you intend to implement a particular strategy you learned in this course into your own teaching situation. (3) Last, write a minimum two-paragraph reflection describing a student you have or have had in the past. Then, discuss how the strategies you learned in this course will specifically benefit that student as you put your plan into action.

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