

Independent Studies Course Syllabus

ELA 921/LRD 903: Helping Students Read & Understand: Content Comprehension 6-12

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Number of Units: 3

Grade Level: 6-12

Course Description

This course will focus on understanding the struggling reader and implementing practical strategies in the classroom that will help students succeed with reading in their content area classes. The class focuses on specific strategies that teachers can implement with the reading material they are already using in their classroom. These strategies will help students understand, make connections and ultimately succeed with their content area classes. Teachers will have the opportunity to design activities and create learning opportunities in their classroom, while delivering standards-based curriculum for their specific discipline. The text used in this course presents both theory regarding struggling readers in the secondary classroom as well as practical and effective teaching strategies for assisting the struggling readers with understanding content area texts. This course is ideal for science, social science, and other content area teachers who work with ESL, ELL, special needs, and low reading level students. This course is strongly aligned with the standards established by the National Council of Teachers of English as well as the Common Core State Standards. The assignments are designed to help teachers implement the objectives of the standards in their own classroom.

Course Dates

Self-paced; students may enroll at any time and take up to one year to complete assignments. You have up to one year from the date of registration, and no less than three weeks (one week per credit), to complete the course.

Course Materials

Tovani, Cris. *Do I Really Have to Teach Reading?* Stenhouse Publishers: Portland, Maine, 2004. (ISBN #1571103767)

Moodle Site Login and password –

Students will be required to work in the Moodle environment. Login and passwords will be issued by the instructor soon after course registration.

Technology Requirements:

In order to successfully complete the course requirements, course participants will need Internet access, be able to send and receive email, know how to manage simple files in a word processing program, and have a basic understanding of the Internet.

Please remember that the instructor is not able to offer technical support. In the event that you need technical support, please contact your Internet Service Provider.

Moodle:

This course will be delivered totally online. Moodle is a learning management system that provides students access to online resources, documents, graded assignments, quizzes, discussion forums, etc. with an easy to learn and use interface. To learn more about moodle, click here. (http://docs.moodle.org/en/Student_tutorials)

Discussion Forums

Participation is an important expectation of this course and all online courses. Online discussions promote reflection and analysis while allowing students to appreciate and evaluate positions that others express. While students may not be engaging with the same students throughout this course they will be expected to offer comments, questions, and replies to the discussion question whenever possible. The faculty role in the discussion forum is that of an observer and facilitator.

Getting Help:

If you need help logging on to the Moodle site, contact The Help Desk as Fresno Pacific University by telephone 1-559-453-3410 or by email helpdesk@fresno.edu.

Course Requirements

Students will be required to complete the detailed assignments outlined in the schedule of topics and assignments. Students will be required to reflect and evaluate both the assigned reading and their own teaching experiences. Students will also design and implement lesson plans that reflect the teaching strategies and approaches discussed in the course texts. Reflecting and evaluating the hands-on strategies discussed is an integral part of the course curricula.

National Content / Common Core Standards

The course addresses the National Council of Teachers of English, standards #1-5, 8, 11 and 12. The course also addresses the English Language Arts Standards for Reading Literature as outlined by the Common Core State Standards Initiative.

Learning Objectives / Outcomes

It is the goal of the instructor that students will have a greater understanding of the importance of reading in the classroom as well as multiple strategies for helping students comprehend a variety of texts. Please note the national standards (as discussed previously) addressed by each objective.

Students of this course will be able to:

1. Explain and reflect upon the process that students undertake when they read text and process information (3, 4, 5).
2. Describe how effective readers understand and process information while they read (3, 4, 5).
3. Create lesson plans that engage students with reading material (1, 4, 5, 8, 12).
4. Design lesson plans that incorporate multiple strategies that aid students in reading comprehension (3, 4, 5, 8, 12).
5. Discover a variety of reading material that is available in their content area to help students understand content matter (1, 8, 11).
6. Model effective reading strategies in their own classroom (3, 4, 5, 12).

7. Discover reading resources available to them through professional books, websites, and state resources (11).
8. Effectively use multiple teaching strategies and reading strategies in their class on a regular basis (3, 4, 5).
9. Teachers will be able implement effective assessments for reading content material in their classroom (3, 4, 5).
10. Develop their own techniques for assisting students with reading comprehension in their own classroom (3, 4, 5).

Schedule of Topics and Assignments

1. *Chapter 1: Introduction Reflection on Reading*
2. *Chapter 1: Introduction Discussion Form*
3. *Chapter 2: The “So What” of Reading Comprehension Activity*
4. *Chapter 2: The “So What” of Reading Comprehension Discussion Forum*
5. *Chapter 3: Parallel Experiences: Tapping the Mother Lode Lesson Plan*
6. *Chapter 4: Real Rigor. Text Set*
7. *Chapter 4: Real Rigor Discussion Forum*
8. *Chapter 5: Why am I Reading This? Lesson Plan*
9. *Chapter 6: Holding Thinking to Remember and Reuse Lesson Plan*
10. *Chapter 7: Group Work That Grows Understanding. Discussion Forum*
11. *Chapter 7: Group Work That Grows Understanding Lesson Plan*
12. *Chapter 8: What Do I Do With All These Sticky Notes? Lesson Plan*
13. *Chapter 8: What Do I Do With All These Sticky Notes? Discussion Forum*
14. *Chapter 8: What Do I Do With All These Sticky Notes? Discussion Forum*
15. *Chapter 9: Did I Miss Anything? Discussion Forum*
16. *State Standards*
17. *Beyond the Text: Using the Internet as a Resource Discussion Forum*
18. *Beyond the Text: Using the Internet as a Resource - Wiki*

Evidence of Learning

1. Student provided evidence of his/her understanding of the course’s objectives and the course text through his/her reflective writing. (Assignments #1, 4, 7, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16)
2. Student designed and implemented lesson plans that demonstrated his/her understanding of the course objectives and the principles of the text. (Assignments #3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13)
3. Student read a professional teaching text and demonstrated his/her critical thinking skills in responding to and engaging with the text and its principles. (Assignments #3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15)
4. Student demonstrated an ability to respond critically and synthesize information successfully into practical lesson plans for the classroom. (Assignments #5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12)
5. Student demonstrated an understanding of his/her state and/or professional teaching standards, and how teaching strategies may be used in the future. (Assignment #6, 11, 12, 16)
6. Student applied ideas from the texts to the classroom. (Assignments #3-18)
7. Student participates in a professional learning community and extends ideas outside of the course text (Assignments #2, 4, 7, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18)

Grading Policies and Rubrics

300 points total
 270-300 = A
 240-269 = B or Credit Grade

Below 239 = No Credit

The discernment between an A or a B is at the discretion of the instructor based on the quality of work submitted (see assignment rubrics). Coursework falling short of a quality equaling a B or a Credit Grade will be returned with further instructions.

All assignments must be completed in order to receive a grade. In addition, all assignments are expected to reflect the quality that teacher-training institutions require of professional educators. If completed assignments do not meet this standard, students will be notified with further instructions from the instructor.

Grading Options

Course participants have the option of requesting a letter grade or a credit/no credit when submitting the online grade form. Students will submit grade form when coursework has been completed. (Instructions will be provided for online grading by the instructor.)

Instructor/Student Contact

A minimum of three instructor/student contacts are required. These may be in the form of discussion form posts/responses and/or individual emails.

References/ Resources

Allen, Janet. *It's Never Too Late: Leading Adolescents to Lifelong Literacy*. New York: Heinemann, 1995.

Beers, Kylene. *Adolescent Literacy: Turning Promise into Practice*. New York: Heinemann, 2007.

Beers, Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read: What Teachers Can Do*. New York: Heinemann, 2004.

Fielding, Audrey. *Building Academic Literacy: Lessons from Reading Apprenticeship Classrooms, Grades 6-12*. New York: Wiley, John & Sons, 2003.

Fielding, Audrey and Ruth Schoenbach. *Building Academic Literacy: An Anthology for Reading Apprenticeship*. New York: Wiley, John & Sons, 2003.

O'Donnell-Allen, Cindy. *The Book Club Companion: Fostering Strategic Readers in the Secondary Classroom*. New York: Heinemann, 2006.

Richison, Jeannine and Marcia Carter. *Theme Sets for Secondary Students: How to Scaffold Core Literature*. New York: Heinemann, 2006.

Schoenbach, Ruth. *Reading for Understanding: A Guide to Improving Reading in Middle and High School*. New York: Wiley, John & Sons, 2000.

Tovani, Cris. *I Read It, But I Don't Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers*. Portland: Stenhouse Publishers, 2000.

Wiggins, Grant. *Understanding by Design*. ASCD, 2005.

Internet Resources

www.ncte.org (National Council of Teachers of English)

www.readwritethink.org (Read, Write, Think)
www.aesopfables.com (Aesop's Fables index and guide)
www.bookhive.org (Book Hive Book Club)
<http://www.childrensbooksonline.org/library.htm> (Children's Books Online)
<http://www.guysread.com/> (Guys Read)
<http://staff.lib.muohio.edu/GirlsVoices/> (Ohio – Girl's Voices in Literature)
<http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/index.html> (Kathy Shrock's Guide for Teachers)
<http://www.LiteracyConnections.com/> (Literacy Connections)
<http://www.literacymatters.org> (Literacy Matters – developed for adolescent readers)
<http://www.rif.org> (Reading is Fundamental)

Policy on Plagiarism

All people participating in the educational process at Fresno Pacific University are expected to pursue honesty and integrity in all aspects of their academic work. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will be handled according to the procedures set forth in the Fresno Pacific University Catalogue.

Fresno Pacific University Desired Student Outcomes

Graduate level course work reflects Fresno Pacific University's Desired Student Learning Outcomes as it applies to professional development to demonstrate the following:

- *Oral and written communication in individual and group settings*
- *Content knowledge, and application of such knowledge in the student's area of interest to affect change*
- *Reflection for personal and professional growth*
- *Critical thinking*
- *Computational/methodological skills to understand and expand disciplines, including an understanding of technological systems*