American Public University System

The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind

Education
EDUC596
Literacy Instruction for Struggling and Challenging Students
Credit Hours = 3
Length of Course = 8 weeks
Prerequisite: EDUC503 (May be taken concurrently)

Courses containing assignments that are field based require candidates to be in an instructional setting. The amount of time completing these tasks will vary, but may typically require approximately 10 hours of access time per course to classroom contexts. See specific assignment descriptions and speak with your instructor for further clarification should you have any questions.

Instructor Information

Instructor: APUS Faculty

Course Description (Catalog)

This course explores a variety of issues and strategies related to literacy and literacy assessment in the early and middle grades. Cases focus upon the problems and opportunities related to literacy instruction for at-risk student populations.

Course participants will develop instructional and leadership skills needed for teaching emergent, beginning and instructional readers and address the education of diverse student populations. Using the cases as a launching point, teachers will be given the opportunity to participate in on-line discussions regarding beliefs, best practices, challenges, current research, and ways to apply them to their own teaching practice.

Course Scope

This course focuses on combining research with everyday strategies to work with struggling readers in all areas of reading instruction components including: phonemic awareness, word identification and phonics, vocabulary and background knowledge, fluency, comprehension strategies, and motivation. These components often are intertwined, with each area affecting another area, thereby creating further
difficulties for struggling readers. Participants will review current research, apply strategies, and analyze the effectiveness of the approach. Current programs to help struggling readers will be compared and evaluated. This course will also closely examine the various implications of language, culture, and intervention on the success of struggling readers. Participants will implement and reflect upon differentiated instruction. Finally, this course will also appraise strategies to develop and strengthen each of the areas of reading components. Each of these goals will be considered while continuing to maintain the tenets of reading education and meeting the needs of the individual child.

Course Objectives

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading. (IRA Standard 1.2)
- Demonstrate knowledge of language development and reading acquisition and the variations related to cultural and linguistic diversity. (IRA Standard 1.3)
- Demonstrate knowledge of the major components of reading (phonemic awareness, word identification and phonics, vocabulary and background knowledge, fluency, comprehension strategies, and motivation) and how they are integrated in fluent reading. (IRA Standard 1.4)
- Use a wide range of instructional practices, approaches and methods, including technology-based practices, for learners at different stages of development and from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds. (IRA Standard 2.1).
- Use a wide range of curriculum materials in effective reading instruction for learners at different stages of reading and writing development and from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. (IRA Standard 2.3)
- Use assessment information to place, evaluate, and revise effective instruction that meets the needs of all students, including those at different developmental stages and those from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds. (IRA Standard 3.3)
- Model reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities. (IRA Standard 4.3)
- Motivate learners to be lifelong readers. (IRA Standard 4.4)
- Work with colleagues to observe, evaluate, and provide feedback on each other’s practice. (IRA Standard 5.3)
- Participate in, initiate, and evaluate professional development programs. (IRA Standard 5.4)

Course Delivery Method

This course, delivered via distance learning, will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments are due by Sunday evening of the week as noted and include Forum Board questions (accomplished in groups through a threaded discussion board), examination, and individual assignments (submitted for review by the Faculty Member). Assigned faculty will support the students throughout this eight-week course.

Course Materials

Required Course Textbooks


**Required Course Materials**

*Note: Required Reading articles can be found at the APUS Library unless otherwise noted.*


Go to the website for the Literacy Achievement Research Center (LARC) at http://www.msularc.org/
Click on “Resources” tab
Then click on “For Educators” tab
Under “LARC Resources for Educators”
Then scroll down to “Comprehension Difficulties”
Then click on and open the 5-page summary document titled “Comprehension Strategies Instruction” provided by Michael Pressley.


Walker, B. (2005). Thinking aloud: Struggling readers often require more than a model. Reading
Teacher, 58(7), 688-692.


Websites

In addition to the required course texts, the following public domain Websites are useful. Please abide by the university’s academic honesty policy when using Internet sources as well. Note Web site addresses are subject to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Name</th>
<th>Website URL/Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>International Reading Association</td>
<td><a href="http://www.reading.org/General/Default.aspx">http://www.reading.org/General/Default.aspx</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>National Council for Teachers of English</td>
<td><a href="http://www.ncte.org/">http://www.ncte.org/</a></td>
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<td>Reading A to Z</td>
<td><a href="http://www.readinga-z.com/">http://www.readinga-z.com/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Rockets</td>
<td><a href="http://www.readingrockets.org/">http://www.readingrockets.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Reading Lady</td>
<td><a href="http://www.readinglady.com/">http://www.readinglady.com/</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Evaluation Procedures

Discussion Board Assignments - During this course you will respond to weekly Discussion Board assignments. Responses to the original discussion question or questions for each week will be due by midnight, Wednesday and responses to at least 2 of your classmates will be due by midnight, Saturday. All due dates are relevant to Eastern Time (ET). Weekly discussions are worth 10 points per initial post, 5 points per response to two peers’ posts for a total of 20 points per Forum topic. Posts are graded with a rubric.

Homework Assignments - There are multiple Assignments due for this class on a weekly basis. All assignments are evaluated utilizing a grading rubric.

Assignments 1 & 2 are due Week 1, Sunday, and are worth 40 points each.
Assignment 3 is due no later than Sunday, Week 2 and is worth 40 points.
Assignments 4 and 5 are due Week 3, Sunday, and are worth 40 points each.
Assignments 6 and 7 are due no later than Week 4, Sunday, and are worth 40 points each.
Assignment 8 and 9 are due Week 5, Sunday, and are worth 40 points each.
Assignments 10 and 11 are due Week 6, Sunday, and are worth 40 points each.
Assignment 12 is due no later than Sunday, Week 7, and is worth 40 points.
Assignment 13 – Observation – is due Sunday, Week 7, and is worth 120 points.
Assignments 14 and 15 are due no later than Sunday, Week 8, and are worth 40 points each.
**Instructor Announcements**

Weekly Announcements will introduce the weekly topic, will offer a brief lecture on that topic and will remind you of assignments due during the week. Weekly announcements may also give some pointers on how to complete weekly assignments and discussions. It is important that you check the Announcements board each week so that you can keep up with the class and its requirements.

**Forum Postings & Participation**

The success of this course depends on our ability to have read the assigned readings closely, to have thought carefully about the points raised or ignored by author, and to bring to the group your questions and concerns about their theses and positions into the discussion groups. Prior to each class I will post Announcements and outline the focus of the subsequent session and direct your reading. Having prepared the readings prior to class ensures your productive participation.

Classes will typically begin with a question I have posed the previous week. We should work to achieve conversational exchanges with each other through Forums and emails, constructively challenging each other to think broadly and critically about ideas or assertions posed by the reading.

In all participation and assignments I am looking for evidence of:

- Demonstration of substantial knowledge and higher order thinking and analytical skills and application of facts, concepts, terms, and processes learned/read/discussed;
- Critical contemplation, i.e., “grapple” with issues and topics;
- Appropriate use of knowledge learned;
- Imaginative thinking and responses to challenges/problems/issues;
- Exploring underlying assumptions about the lifelong value of education and classroom management of schooling;
- Clarity of expression and logical connection among ideas expressed;
- Writing that reflects precise and concise thinking;
- Excellent grammar, syntax, and spelling.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Instruments</th>
<th>Possible Total Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forum Participation (16 @ 20 points each)</td>
<td>320</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homework Assignments (14 @ 40 points each)</td>
<td>560</td>
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<tr>
<td>Observation</td>
<td>120</td>
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<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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</table>
| 1    | Differentiating Reading for the Struggling Reader | • Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading.  
• Participate in, initiate, and evaluate professional development programs. | **File Download:** Struggling First-Grade Readers: The Frequency and Progress of their Reading.  
**File Download:** How Differentiated Instruction Helps Struggling Students.  
**File Download:** A Comparison of Teacher-Directed Versus Peer-Assisted Instruction to Struggling First Grade Readers.  
**File Download:** Interactional Differentiation in the Mixed-Ability Group: A Situated View of Two Struggling Readers. | Forum 1  
Assignments  
• Assignment 1  
• Assignment 2 |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2</th>
<th>Comprehension Strategies for the Struggling Reader</th>
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<tr>
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<td>• Model reading and writing enthusiastically as valued lifelong activities.</td>
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<td>Text: “Strategies that Work: Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding”. Harvey &amp; Goudvis. Part II.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Text: “I Read It, but I Don’t Get It: Comprehension Strategies for Adolescent Readers”. Tovani.</td>
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<td>File Download: Help for Struggling Upper-Grade Elementary Readers</td>
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<td>Website: Comprehension Strategies Instruction from the Literacy Achievement Research Center.</td>
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<td>Website: Direct Reading/Thinking Activity DRTA.</td>
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<td>File Download: Supporting Comprehension Acquisition for Emerging and Struggling Readers: The Interactive Information Book Read-Aloud.</td>
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<td>File Download: Thinking Aloud: Struggling Readers Often Require More than a Model.</td>
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<td>Forum 3</td>
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<td>• Assignment 3</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Phonemic Awareness for the Struggling Reader</td>
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| • Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading.  
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• Demonstrate knowledge of language development and reading acquisition and the variations related to cultural and linguistic diversity.  
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• Use a wide range of instructional practices, approaches and methods, including technology-based practices, for learners at different stages of development and from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds. |
File Download: Preparing Teachers to Support Struggling First-Grade Readers.  
File Download: Adolescent Literacy: Wordy Study with Middle and High School Students.  
File Download: Explicit Instruction in Phonemic Awareness and Phonemically Based Decoding Skills as an Intervention Strategy for Struggling Readers in Whole Language Classrooms.  
Review the Additional Resources to supplement your learning. |
| Forum 5  
Forum 6  
Assignments  
• Assignment 4  
• Assignment 5 |
| 4 | Phonics for the Struggling Reader |
| • Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading.  
• Participate in, initiate, and evaluate professional development programs.  
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• Use a wide range of instructional |
| File Download: Phonics Instruction for Older Students? Just Say No.  
File Download: Teaching Children with Reading Problems to Decode: Phonics and ‘Not Phonics’ Instruction. |
| Forum 7  
Forum 8  
Assignments  
• Assignment 6  
• Assignment 7 |
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| 5 | Vocabulary for the Struggling Reader | • Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading.  
• Participate in, initiate, and evaluate professional development programs.  
• Demonstrate knowledge of language development and reading acquisition and the variations related to cultural and linguistic diversity.  
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• Use a wide range of instructional practices, approaches and methods, including technology-based practices, for learners at different stages of development and from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds. |
|   |   | File Download: A Root Awakening: Vocabulary Instruction for Older Students with Reading Difficulties.  
File Download: Vocabulary Instruction for the Struggling Reader. |
|   |   | Forum 9  
Forum 10  
Assignments  
• Assignment 8  
• Assignment 9 |
| 6 | Fluency for the Struggling Reader | • Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading.  
• Participate in, initiate, and evaluate professional development programs.  
• Demonstrate knowledge of language development and reading acquisition and the variations related to cultural and linguistic diversity.  
• Demonstrate knowledge of the major components of reading (phonemic awareness, word identification and

|   |   | File Download: From Phonics to Fluency: Effective Teaching of Decoding and Reading Fluency in the Elementary Classroom.  
|   |   | Forum 11  
Forum 12  
Assignments  
• Assignment 10  
• Assignment 11 |
phonics, vocabulary and background knowledge, fluency, comprehension strategies, and motivation) and how they are integrated in fluent reading.
- Use a wide range of instructional practices, approaches and methods, including technology-based practices, for learners at different stages of development and from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
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7  Technology Interventions for the Struggling Reader

- Demonstrate knowledge of reading research and histories of reading.
- Participate in, initiate, and evaluate professional development programs.
- Demonstrate knowledge of language development and reading acquisition and the variations related to cultural and linguistic diversity.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the major components of reading (phonemic awareness, word identification and phonics, vocabulary and background knowledge, fluency, comprehension strategies, and motivation) and how they are integrated in fluent reading.

**File Download:** Stories About Struggling Readers and Technology.

**File Download:** Using Text-to-Speech Software with Struggling Readers.

**File Download:** Using An Interactive Singing Software Program: A Comparative Study Of Struggling Middle School Readers.

**File Download:** Video Feedforward for Reading.

**Website:** Reading Rockets: Assistive Technology.

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<th>Forum 13</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Assignment 12</td>
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<td>• Assignment 13</td>
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<td>Family Partnerships for the Struggling Reader</td>
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<td>- Motivate learners to be lifelong readers.</td>
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<td><strong>File Download:</strong> Fun-filled Family Literacy Nights.</td>
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<td><strong>File Download:</strong> The Silencing of Sammy: One Struggling Reader Learning with his Peers.</td>
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<td><strong>File Download:</strong> Building Home-School Partnerships: A Way of Enhancing Reading Literacy of Diverse Learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Website:</strong> Reading Rockets video “Making Parents Partners”.</td>
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<td>Review the Additional Resources to supplement your learning.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Forums**
- Forum 15
- Forum 16

**Assignments**
- Assignment 14
- Assignment 15
E-Bibliography
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TO BE DELIVERED BY APUS LIBRARY