

## Teaching Struggling Readers: Theory into Practice (E)

15:252:592; Spring 2013

   Online

### Contact

#### Contact

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**Department:** Learning and Teaching

**Consultation hours:** By appointment

### Required Readings

**All Required Readings are posted on Sakai**

### Course Description, Objectives, Expectations, and Requirements

This online course is designed to meet the needs to inservice and preservice teachers/educators at the upper elementary and secondary school levels who are seeking additional resources for teaching struggling readers. In this semester-long course, teachers will explore learning and teaching strategies for “struggling” readers who can be broadly defined as students with a range of reading competences including those who are unmotivated, in remediation, disenchanted or generally unsuccessful in school literacy tasks (Moore, Alvermann, & Hinchman, 2000).

The course will provide participants with a framework for studying their own practice. There will be an emphasis on the integration of research, theory and practice that invites participants to take a hands-on approach to understanding the current literature on struggling readers, and its applications to their own real-world classroom contexts. Course assignments will include critical discussions, professional development workshops, student case study, and instructional intervention unit plan. Course participants will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning through their full engagement, and to make the course as meaningful as possible to their specific interests and needs by developing and conducting tutoring plans, lessons and activities that target their own classrooms and students.

**Literacy Domains:** These six domains will act as a frame for the course, providing a lens with which to view readings, discussions, and your own experiences.

**Sociocultural** (What are teachers & students bringing and encountering?)

What issues of culture, context, language, and identity have to do with learning and teaching?

**Affective** (What are teachers & students feeling?)

What motivates students to see the worth of reading and what discourages students from reading?

**Cognitive** (What and how are teachers & students thinking?)

What and how are teachers & students thinking when they read?

**Curricular** (What are teachers & students reading?)

What counts as useful and substantive material for academic texts?

**Assessment** (What are teachers & students coming to understand?)

What is it we can do within and without classrooms to understand how our students achieve and struggle as readers and to help them to better facilitate their own learning?

**Pedagogic** (What are teachers & students doing?)

What can we do within and without classrooms to help students become more thoughtful and critical readers?

**New Jersey Professional Standards Covered**

1. *Subject Matter Knowledge*: Teaching of English Language
2. *Human Growth and Development*: Studying Adolescence and Teenagers and their habits and stages of development
3. *Diverse Learners*: Accounting for multiple learning styles and multimodality in secondary learning
4. *Instructional Planning and Strategies*: Planning lessons, units, and learning strategies
5. *Assessment*: Balance of formative and summative assessments
6. *Learning Environment*: Diversifying classroom space and adopting differentiated instruction
7. *Special Needs*: Modifying program based on student needs
8. *Communication*: Having an understanding and interaction with age group and forging a community with peers
9. *Collaboration and Partnerships*: Sharing a community with other educators and joining organizations tied to subject expertise.

**Course Objectives**

Students will be able to

1. Effectively synthesize literacy theory to assess, target and apply appropriate strategies for a range of struggling readers.
2. Critically reflect on and write about their personal and conceptual assumptions about of who are struggling readers and what it means to teach struggling readers.
3. Develop and document a reading intervention and framework for teaching diverse learners.
4. Apply intervention strategies to teach or tutor a student or class of struggling readers.
5. Work collaboratively in groups to expand professional knowledge base by designing and delivering an online workshop on a literacy topic, instructional strategies, and professional texts.
6. Create and execute a plan for curriculum, instruction and assessment.

**Expectations**

This course is designed to support the teacher, educator and practitioner in his/her preparation for professional practice in his/her own classroom. Consequently, in order to better facilitate ongoing practice, course participants are encouraged to see themselves as practitioners and researchers of their practice.

**Note:** This syllabus is a general plan and is therefore subject to change.

**Participation/Attendance**

Each student is expected to be fully prepared to engage in meaningful sharing and co-construction of knowledge. Full and engaged participation in all assignments (individual and group) is required. Regular, punctual attendance is required during any scheduled synchronous meetings.

All work must be submitted on time. Late assignments will result in a reduction in your overall course letter grade.

**Disability Requirements:** In accordance with Rutgers University policy, qualified students with disabilities will be reasonably accommodated. Please direct disability request(s) to instructor.

**Academic Integrity:** With reference to the Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity, please note the following:

*Students must assume responsibility for maintaining honesty in all work submitted for credit and in any other work designated by the instructor of the course.*

<http://ctaar.rutgers.edu/integrity/policy.html#Integrity>

## Assignments

### **Discussions (20 points)**

1. Each student must **post five (5) Discussions** on the Discussion page on Sakai. Your post must be a critical, substantive discussion of the issues and ideas from the weekly readings, tasks, and discussions.
2. In addition to the Discussion posts, you are also required to **respond to the posts** of at least TWO of your classmates for each of the assigned weeks.

### **Workshop Presentation (20 pts.)**

For this project, you will collaborate in groups (3-4 members) to create a digital workshop presentation. For this project, you will collaborate in groups (3-4 members) to create a digital workshop presentation. The workshop presentation must include (a) professional topic (b) practical strategy (c) book review.

### **Case Study Report (40 pts.)**

This project requires you conduct apply the theory, strategies and approaches by working with one student of your choice. You will be required to write up the following: (a) Student Reader Profile, (b) Tutoring Logs, and (c) Intervention Unit Plan and Critique.

## **Discussions (20 pts.)**

### **Discussion Posts**

Each student must post five (5) Discussions on the Discussion page on Sakai. Your discussion for each week should be based on (1) the Guiding Question (see *General Session Outline*), (2) at least 3 of the readings for the respective weeks, tasks (e.g. tutoring) and, (3) class discussions, presentations, and lectures. Each post must engage in substantive discussion and critical analysis of and reflection on key issues raised.

**Note:** Discussion Posts must be 1 page in length (**200-300 words**) and are due by **7:00 p.m.** on due dates: **February 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>; March 7<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>; April 18<sup>th</sup>.**

### Discussion Responses

In addition to the Discussion posts, you are also required to *respond* to the posts of at least TWO of your classmates for each of the assigned weeks. Your responses must thoughtfully engage and make meaningful connections with the issues and questions raised in the post to which you are responding. Your replies should add to your peers thought by providing supporting facts and ideas as it relates to the unit or presenting an alternative thought. Do not stop with "I agree" or "You are right,"-- this will not warrant full credit.

**Note: Discussion Responses will count toward your attendance/participation grade.**

**ALL Discussion Posts and Responses are due by 7:00 p.m. on the respective due dates: February 7<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup>; March 7<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup>; April 18<sup>th</sup>.**

### Workshop Presentation (20 pts.)

Over the course of the semester, the weekly readings, tasks and discussions are designed to foster your professional growth. With this mind, the Workshop Presentation is a hands-on, interactive way for you to actively investigate a specific topic of choice and support your learning and that of your colleagues/peers.

For this project, you will collaborate in groups (3-4 members) to create a digital workshop presentation. The workshop presentation must include (a) professional topic (b) practical strategy (c) book share website, blog or wiki.

- (A) **Professional Topic:** Identify and discuss a topic of interest to the group related to teaching struggling readers/learners.
- (B) **Practical Strategy:** You must share two practical instructional strategies/activities/ideas for working with struggling readers. The strategy can be related to the topic and/or the Book Club text. The description and explanation of the strategy should be clear and specific enough so that the class members can try it out with their students. Provide supporting materials and/or visuals as needed.
- (C) **Book Review:** Select a Book of your choice that is a **professional** text intended to be a teaching resource for teachers/educators. Your Book Review website, blog or wiki site should include the following: **1)** a brief overview of the text (i.e., summary, purpose, audience, etc.), **2)** a book critique (strengths, weaknesses, etc.) that could possibly be posted on a site like Amazon.com, and **3)** demonstration/discussion of explicit connections that you have made between the book and classroom teaching/learning.

### Case Study Report (40 pts.):

This project is designed to integrate theory and practice by pulling together educational literature, research, class discussions, reflections, observations, personal experiences and field teaching experiences. In the Case Study Report, you will be required to write up the following: (a) Student Reader Profile, (b) Tutoring Logs, and (c) Intervention Unit Plan and Critique. This project requires you conduct apply the theory, strategies and approaches by working with one student of your choice.

You are responsible for identifying one student from a secondary or upper elementary grade level for your case. As part of the case, you are required to observe and research the student in order to assess his/her needs, conduct one-on-one tutoring where you will apply the strategies learned in the course, record your observations of these tutoring sessions (written, audio and video logs), and then design an intervention instructional unit for the specific student based on his/her needs. These tasks will be presented in the Case Study Report.

### **(A) Student Reader Profile (10 points)**

Conduct **classroom and/or home observations** of a type of upper elementary/middle or high school reader:

- Conduct one **interview and/or survey** with the student identified.
- Provide any additional information about the learner from school records, family interviews etc.
- Based on your observations, informal conversations interview with student, official school records, parents/family, teachers, etc., and your readings of the educational literature on the subject, construct a profile of this learner.

#### **Your student reader profile must include:**

- ❖ Definition with supporting evidence of the type of struggling reader: Struggling (b) Gifted (c) Second Language (d) Resistant (e) Engaged (g) Indifferent.
- ❖ Academic performance
- ❖ Affective behaviors and physical characteristics
- ❖ Sociocultural background
- ❖ Literacy practices – how student relates to literacy and learning (in and out of class); attitudes, experiences
- ❖ Strengths and challenges as a reader
- ❖ Literacy event – describe a key event that best gives insight into the struggle, success and/or indifference.

The project must integrate the following: (a) Readings (b) Fieldnotes of observations (c) Class discussions (d) One page excerpt of interview transcript in appendix

**NB.** All traceable identifiers must be removed. **Use pseudonyms for all identifiable information.**

**Format:** APA/MLA guidelines; 4-6 pages (excluding title page, references and appendices); double-spaced, 12 point font.

**Due Date: February 28<sup>th</sup> @ 7 p.m.**

### **(B) Tutoring Logs (10 points)**

Each week's readings and discussions are intended to build your knowledge and skills and support your practical work with your student. As part of your report, you will be asked to submit 4 logs in which you describe your tutoring sessions.

#### **Your Tutoring Logs must include:**

1. **Session goals & objectives:** This section describes what you hope to achieve with your students by the end of your tutoring session.
2. **Summary/Observations:** This section reports the strategies and modifications etc. The section summarizes and describes what you did with your student, including materials,

student's reaction, progress, observations, etc. Identify the most and least effective strategies.

- 3 **Critical Reflection:** Please use readings as lenses from which to evaluate the progress you and the student are making, and connections across the tutoring sessions.
- 4 **Next Steps:** Include a plan for the future use of strategies and description of how this session is informing your thoughts about the next meeting.

**Due Dates: March 7<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>; April 4<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup>**

### **(C) Intervention Unit Plan & Critique (20 points)**

This task requires you to create an Instructional Unit for your struggling reader.

- ✓ Provide a **Rationale for your pedagogical approach.** Discussion (supported by the literature) of the theoretical lenses shaping your philosophy; your pedagogical approaches to teaching struggling readers. Discussion must be supported by the research literature.
- ✓ Instructional Unit must:
  - (1) Reflect some multimodal component.
  - (2) Comprise an **outline or summary of 4-6 lessons.**
  - (3) Provide (a) Unit Rationale and Goals (b) Common Core State Standards (c) Key Concepts (d) Lesson plans (4-6 lessons) (e) Resources, Texts, Materials and Activities (f) Assessments (g) Modifications
  - (4) Include **one detailed lesson plan** (from your instructional unit)
  - (5) References
- ✓ **Write a Critique/Reflection on the Instructional Unit**
  - (a) Strengths of your approaches
  - (b) Limitations of approaches and possible ways to address these issues
- ✓ References

**Format:** APA/MLA guidelines; 6-8 pages (excluding title page and references); double-spaced, 12 pt. font.

**Due Date: 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2013 @ 11:59 p.m.**

❖ (See GSE sample Lesson and Unit Plans in *Resources* folder on Sakai.)

## Grading

### Procedure

Grades will be based on the following projects/activities and criteria:

Discussion	20 points
Workshop	20 points
Case Report	40 points
Participation/Attendance	20 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

### Grading Scale

A = 92-100
B+ = 87-91.99
B = 82-86.99
C+ = 77-81.99

C = 72-76.99

D = 60-71.99

## Rubrics

### Discussions

4 points = Superior Evidence Shown

The work shows clear evidence that the writer went beyond the expectations of competent effort by taking the care and effort to distinguish the work as an original, complex, and vigorous example of that criterion. It fulfills its potential given the limits of production and has impact.

3 points = Useful Evidence Shown

The work is useful and clearly reflects care and concern in terms of fulfilling the needs of the criterion, but doesn't necessarily distinguish itself beyond the expectations of a competently crafted piece.

2 points = Adequate Evidence Shown

The work fulfills minimum quality standards for the criterion, but shows little enthusiasm or intention to do more. It promises more than it delivers.

1 point = Little Evidence Shown

The work does little to fulfill the minimum quality standards for the criterion.

0 points = No Evidence Shown / No submission

The work shows no evidence of any effort to fulfill the criterion.

### Criteria for Discussions, Workshop Presentations and Case Study Reports

General Criteria	Description
<b>Depth of Thought and Expression</b>	Includes the specificity with which arguments are supported and the use of details in ways that are apt and help the reader to more clearly see the author's perspective. It must bring out the individual nature of the work through vivid use of detail as well as connect that work to other works.
<b>Organization of Thought &amp; Expression</b>	Includes the logical flow of the language and ideas, as well as the sequencing of details. The detail is organized in such a way that it deepens the grasp of the subject matter and delves beneath the surface. The work must feel cohesive in construction.
<b>Originality of Thought &amp; Expression</b>	Includes deft and interesting use of language, insight into matters discussed, connections, and of thought. The work must feel original in thought and execution.
<b>Synthesis of Ideas</b>	Includes the way the ideas in the text come together as a whole, the way the text includes and rethinks the work of the class, and the way the text includes and rethinks the readings, assigned and otherwise, of the class. The writing must take the ideas of the class and make new meaning rather than merely rehashing or summarizing.
<b>Conventions &amp; Expectations</b>	Includes spelling, punctuation, capitalization, paragraphing, usage, writing conventions such as title pages and page numbers, physical presentation, correctness of detail, completion of all tasks, and use of appropriate (APA/MLA) formatting where applicable. The work must meet all expectations and requirements of the assignment, and show professionalism in all aspects of a final product and complete what it set out to do with vigor and engagement.

## General Session Outline

Session	Date	Guiding Question	Readings	Assignments
1.	Jan 24	<b>The “Struggling” Reader:</b> What are my assumptions about the struggling reader/learner? Who are adolescents and how do they learn?	* Beers 1 * Reardon 6 *Vaca & Vaca 1 &2 Alvermann Identities	
2.	Jan 31	<b>Understanding Achievement (Gap)</b> How can we begin to understand learners the kinds of support learners need? What theoretical and pedagogical tools and structures of support are available across grade levels?	* Cooper * Palmer * Snow *Thompson * Williams	<i>Lecture 1</i>
3	Feb 7	<b>Reading Foundation:</b> <b>(a) Phonics &amp; Spelling</b>	*Ransinski et al. *Stahl et al. *Templeton	<i>Lecture 2</i>  <i>Discussion 1</i>
		<b>(b) Fluency and Word Decoding</b> What are some basic practices and belief about how students learn that can guide instruction?	*Archer et al. *Kuhn *Paige et al.	
4	Feb 14	<b>Reading Comprehension</b> How do I understand the concepts of comprehension, reading and engagement within the context of the classroom? What are the implications for reading outside of the classroom?	*Mathes * Liang * Kelly * Hall	<i>Lecture 3</i>
5	Feb 21	<b>The Reading Process</b> Reading to learn or learning to read? Are these mutually exclusive and how might these views inform ways of looking at engagement and instruction?	*Alvermann & Phelps *Ambe *Beers 6,7&8 *Schirmer 3	<i>Lecture 4</i>  <i>Discussion 2</i>
6	Feb 28	<b>Reading and Literature</b> What motivates students to see the worth of reading and what discourages students from reading? What counts as useful and substantive texts?	*Buehl *Gavelek & Raphael *Raphael *Raphael & McMahon *Rickards Smith & Wilhelm	<i>Lecture 5</i>  <b>Reader Profile</b>
7	Mar 7	<b>Intervention Strategies: Theory into practice</b> What can we do to help students who struggle as readers become more proficient and confident readers?	*Collins *Dunston *Fisher & Ivey *Graves *Litt *Thomas	<i>Lecture 6</i>  <b>Tutoring Log#1</b>  <i>Discussion 3</i>
	Mar 14	<b>Assessments</b> How do we approach the politics of literacy	*Alvermann/Phelps 5 *Blasingame	<i>Workshop Group 1</i>

		assessment?	*Dennis *Higgins & Miller Vaca & Vaca 6	<b>Tutoring Log#2</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Mar 21</b>	<b>SPRING RECESS</b>		
10	Mar 28	<b>The Teaching/Learning Context:</b> <b>Multimodal Literacy</b> How do we begin to engage students in multiple literacy practices?	*Beach 1&2 *Chun *Gambrell *Moje *Smetana *Vasudevan *Zambo	<i>Workshop Group 2</i>  <i>Discussion 4</i>
11	Apr 4	<b>The Teaching/Learning Context:</b> <b>Classroom Environment</b> How do the environment and instruction shape the learning that occurs?	* Afflerbach * Hynd 4 * Alvermann/Phelps 3 * Kalnin * Schirmer 8	<i>Workshop Group 3</i>  <b>Tutoring Log#3</b>
12	Apr 11	<b>The Teaching/Learning Context:</b> <b>Learners, Readers &amp; Writers</b>	*Casey *Patterson *Schirmer 7 *Schoenbach 4&7 Vaca & Vaca 3	<i>Workshop Group 4</i>  <b>Tutoring Log#4</b>
13	Apr 18	<b>Critical Literacy</b> How do we become critical literacy teachers? What can we do to help students become more thoughtful and critical readers/learners?	*Compton *Alger * Nieto * Hicks * Delpit	<i>Workshop Group 5</i>  <i>Discussion 5</i>
14	Apr 25	<b>The Reflective Practitioner</b> What is my evolving approach to literacy instruction for struggling readers/learners?		<i>Workshop Group 6</i>
15	May 2			<i>Case Report</i>