Teaching Struggling Readers: Theory into Practice (E)
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Graduate School of Education, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Contact

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Office Hours: by appointment	Prerequisites or other limitations: None
Mode of Instruction: ___ Lecture __ Seminar ___ Hybrid __X_ Online ___ Other	Permission required: _X_ No __Yes Directions about where to get permission numbers: from the instructor

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentations: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form.

Course Description, Goals, & Expectations/Requirements

Learning Goals
1. To effectively synthesize literacy theory to assess, target and apply appropriate strategies for a range of struggling readers.
2. To 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. To develop and document a reading intervention and framework for teaching diverse learners.
4. To apply intervention strategies to teach a class or tutor struggling reader(s).

5. To 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. To create and execute a plan for curriculum, instruction and assessment.

New Jersey Professional Standards for Teachers (2014)[1]:

Standard Two: Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
   ii. Essential Knowledge
2) The teacher understands and identifies differences in approaches to learning and performance and knows how to design instruction that uses each learner's strengths to promote growth
5) The teacher understands that learners bring assets for learning based on their individual experiences, abilities, talents, prior learning, and peer and social group interactions, as well as language, culture, family, and community values
   iii. Critical Dispositions:
1) The teacher believes that all learners can achieve at high levels and persists in helping each learner reach his or her full potential;
2) The teacher respects learners as individuals with differing personal and family backgrounds and various skills, abilities, perspectives, talents, and interests;
3) The teacher makes learners feel valued and helps them learn to value each other; and

Standard Three: Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
   ii. Essential Knowledge
1) The teacher understands the relationship between motivation and engagement and knows how to design learning experiences using strategies that build learner self-direction and ownership of learning;
3) The teacher knows how to collaborate with learners to establish and monitor elements of a safe and productive learning environment including norms, expectations, routines, and organizational structures;
   iii. Critical Dispositions
1) The teacher is committed to working with learners, colleagues, families, and communities to establish positive and supportive learning environments;
2) The teacher values the role of learners in promoting each other's learning and recognizes the importance of peer relationships in establishing a climate of learning.
3) The teacher is committed to supporting learners as they participate in decision-making, engage in exploration and invention, work collaboratively and independently, and engage in purposeful learning; and
4) The teacher seeks to foster respectful communication among all members of the learning community.

Standard Five: Application of Content. The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
   ii. Essential Knowledge
6) The teacher understands communication modes and skills as vehicles for learning (for example, information gathering and processing) across disciplines as well as vehicles for expressing learning;
   iii. Critical Dispositions

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[1] http://www.state.nj.us/education/code/current/title6a/chap9.pdf

3) The teacher values flexible learning environments that encourage learner exploration, discovery, and expression across content areas.

Standard Seven: Planning for Instruction. The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

ii. Essential Knowledge

2) The teacher understands how integrating cross-disciplinary skills in instruction engages learners purposefully in applying content knowledge.

3) The teacher understands learning theory, human development, cultural diversity, and individual differences and how theses impact ongoing planning

iii. Critical Dispositions

1) The teacher respects learners' diverse strengths and needs and is committed to using this information to plan effective instruction

4) The teacher believes that plans must always be open to adjustment and revision based on learner needs and changing circumstances.

Standard Eight: Instructional Strategies. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

ii. Essential Knowledge

2) The teacher knows how to apply a range of developmentally, culturally, and linguistically appropriate instructional strategies to achieve learning goals;

iii. Critical Dispositions

1) The teacher is committed to deepening awareness and understanding the strengths and needs of diverse learners when planning and adjusting instruction.

Council for the Accreditation of Education Professionals (2013)[2]:

Standard 1: CONTENT AND PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Professional Dispositions

1.1 Candidates demonstrate an understanding of the *InTASC* standards at the appropriate progression level(s) in the following categories: the learner and learning; content; instructional practice; and professional responsibility.

Standard #1: **Learner Development**. The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

Standard #2: **Learning Differences**. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.

Standard #3: **Learning Environments**. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self motivation.

Standard #4: **Content Knowledge**. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.

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[2] http://caepnet.files.wordpress.com/2013/09/final_board_approved1.pdf

Standard #5: **Application of Content**. The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.
Standard #6: **Assessment**. The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
Standard #7: **Planning for Instruction**. The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.
Standard #8: **Instructional Strategies**. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.
Standard #9: **Professional Learning and Ethical Practice**. The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.

Course Catalogue Description

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.

Required Readings
All Required Readings are posted on Sakai

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.

All written work and presentations are expected to:
- Respond to the assigned task

- Present ideas in a clear, thoughtful, logical and organized manner
- Demonstrate critical thinking, and originality and creativity of thought and expression
- Synthesize readings and discussions
- Reflect sound command of conventions and mechanics
- Adhere to APA 6th format or MLA guidelines, and 12-point font, 1-inch margins (where applicable)
- Be submitted on time

Lesson and Unit Plans
The feedback for the lesson and unit plans will take three forms: **one-on-one consultations**, **open-ended/free response** and **GSE Teacher Education Expectations** (see: *Teaching Internship Evaluation Form*).

Academic Integrity Policy
Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Refer to http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml for a full explanation of policies.

Participation/Attendance
Each student must 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.

All work must be submitted on time. Late submission of 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.

Assignments

Discussions (20 points)

1. You 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 assignment, you will collaborate with one classmate to create a digital workshop presentation of your choice based on course content. The workshop presentation must include (a) professional topic (b) practical/instructional strategies, and (c) book review.

Case Study Report (40 pts.)

This report requires you to work with/tutoring of one student during which you document your application of the theories, strategies and approaches from the course. Your report must contain the following: (a) Student Reader Profile, (b) Tutoring Logs, and (c) Intervention Unit Plan and Critique.

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
Total	**100 points**

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
Depth of Thought and Expression	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.
Organization of Thought & Expression	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.
Originality of Thought & Expression	Includes deft and interesting use of language, insight into matters discussed, connections, and of thought. The work must feel original in thought and execution.
Synthesis of Ideas	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.
Conventions & Expectations	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.

Weekly Session Outline

Session	Date	Guiding Question	Readings	Assignments
1.	Jan 20	**The "Struggling" Reader**: What are my assumptions about the struggling reader/learner? Who are adolescents and how do they learn?	*Alvermann_Identities * Beers 1 * Readence 6 *Vaca & Vaca 1 & 2	
2.	Jan 27	**Understanding Achievement (Gap)** 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	*Lecture 1*
3	Feb 3	**Reading Foundation:** **(a) Phonics & Spelling** **(b) Fluency and Word Decoding** What are some basic practices and belief about how students learn that can guide instruction?	*Ransinski et al. *Stahl et al. *Templeton *Archer et al. *Kuhn *Paige et al.	*Lecture 2* *Discussion 1*
4	Feb 10	**Reading Comprehension** 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?	*Brown & Dewitz * Hall * Kelly *Liang *Mahdavi & Tensfeldt *Mathes *Schiff & Calif	*Lecture 3*
5	Feb 17	**The Reading Process** 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	*Lecture 4* *Discussion 2*
6	Feb 24	**Reading and Literature** 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	*Lecture 5* **Reader Profile**

7	Mar 3	**Intervention Strategies: Theory into practice** What can we do to help students who struggle as readers become more proficient and confident readers?	*Collins *Dunston *Fisher & Ivey *Graves *Litt *Mason *Thomas	*Lecture 6* **Tutoring Log #1** *Discussion 3*
	Mar 10	**Assessments** How do we approach the politics of literacy assessment?	*Alvermann/Phelps 5 *Blasingame *Dennis *Higgins & Miller Vaca & Vaca 6	*Workshop Group 1* **Tutoring Log #2**
9	Mar 17	SPRING RECESS		
10	Mar 24	**The Teaching/Learning Context:** **Multimodal Literacy** How do we begin to engage students in multiple literacy practices?	*Beach 1 & 2 *Chun *Gambrell *Moje *Smetana *Vasudevan *Zambo	*Workshop Group 2* *Discussion 4*
11	Mar 31	**The Teaching/Learning Context:** **Classroom Environment** How do environments and instruction shape the learning that occurs?	* Afflerbach * Hynd 4 *Alvermann/Phelps 3 * Kalnin *Schirmer 8	*Workshop Group 3* **Tutoring Log #3**
12	Apr 7	**The Teaching/Learning Context:** **Learners, Readers & Writers**	*Casey *Patterson *Schirmer 7 *Schoenbach 4 & 7 Vaca & Vaca 3	*Workshop Group 4* **Tutoring Log #4**
13	Apr 14	**Critical Literacy** 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	*Workshop Group 5* *Discussion 5*
14	Apr 21	**The Reflective Practitioner** What is my evolving approach to literacy instruction for struggling readers/learners?		*Workshop Group 6*
15	Apr 28			*CASE REPORT*