



## **Professional Development Institute**

### **Flex Course Syllabus**

# **Closing the Gap: Focusing on Critical Literacy and Math Skills (K-5)**

**PDI Course Number: 157T02**

**UCSD Course Number: EDUC42528**

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**

Are you struggling to find ways to identify and reduce the achievement gap you are seeing in your classroom? Do you want to learn how to shift your mindset from a loss perspective to sustainable learning? Teachers across the nation are searching for best practices to close the achievement gap, especially as it applies to the essential skills of literacy and math. Instead of focusing on learning that has been “lost,” the consensus is that there is a need to “slow down to speed up.” This online course is designed to equip K-5 teachers with numerous strategies to help students master essential literacy and math skills by taking learning deeper, not wider, making it sustainable. The course begins by outlining the learning process and discussing several factors that promote deeper learning, or mastery, of content. Teachers will learn that a critical piece of teaching these essential skills is fostering collaborative learning. As the course progresses, teachers will take a deep dive into each essential learning skill as it relates to literacy and mathematics. Numerous strategies to assess and teach each of these critical skills will be provided. Finally, teachers will be introduced to the Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Framework, and they will learn how to promote cross-curricular thinking. Using a strengths-based approach to learning, teachers will understand the relationship between literacy and math and how these seemingly different content areas can be used to leverage one another. By the end of this course,

teachers will feel more confident and successful in their quest to embed a variety of evidence-based strategies into their own teaching habits to help foster sustainable learning and promote future college and career success.

## **Educational Outcomes**

1. Teachers will learn the six essential skills and how they relate to foundational literacy and math skills.
2. Teachers will understand John Hattie's three phases of learning and will learn strategies to take learning deeper.
3. Teachers will understand the importance of collaboration and will learn best practices for implementing collaborative learning.
4. Teachers will be able to discern the five stages of literacy development.
5. Teachers will understand the impact that speaking and listening skills have on students' reading skills and will learn strategies to support development of these skills.
6. Teachers will learn about the foundational reading skills and how they are essential to students' overall reading ability and literacy growth.
7. Teachers will learn strategies to assess and teach sustainable learning best practices in phonemic awareness, phonics, and decoding.
8. Teachers will learn strategies to assess and teach sustainable learning best practices in vocabulary and fluency.
9. Teachers will learn strategies to assess and teach sustainable learning best practices in comprehension.
10. Teachers will explore the components of effective writing and will learn strategies to assess their students' writing strengths and abilities.
11. Teachers will understand the connection between reading and writing and will learn strategies intentionally designed to leverage this connection.
12. Teachers will learn techniques to increase students' writing stamina and improve their writing skills.
13. Teachers will learn the essential mathematics skills that lay the foundation for future learning in math.
14. Teachers will explore the Standards for Mathematical Practice and will learn how they can be used to improve students' mathematical skills.
15. Teachers will learn various methods of summative and formative assessment in mathematics.
16. Teachers will be introduced to the Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Framework and will learn strategies to integrate real-world experiences to improve students' critical-thinking skills.
17. Teachers will learn strategies to help students reach mastery of essential math skills.
18. Teachers will understand the connections between reading and math and will learn strategies to implement cross-curricular thinking by leveraging students' strengths.

## **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: Design Two Lesson Plans That Empower Sustainable Learning (20% of final grade)
- Culminating Practicum (20% of final grade)

## Topical Outline

### Unit One

- Essential Skills: The Building Blocks of Success
- Taking It Deeper, Not Wider
- Collaboration: A Critical Piece of the Essential Skills Puzzle
- **Assignment #1**  
*Write an autobiography including information about yourself, your grade level and what you specifically hope to learn about targeting the most critical reading and math skills to help K-5 students succeed. Your autobiography should be a minimum of three paragraphs.*
- **Test #1**

### Unit Two

- Literacy Pathway: An Overview
- Essential Skills for Speaking and Listening
- Essential Foundational Reading Skills to Empower Learning
- **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

- Strategies to Empower Sustainable Learning in Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Decoding
- Strategies to Empower Sustainable Learning in Vocabulary and Fluency
- Strategies to Empower Sustainable Learning in Comprehension
- **Assignment #3**  
*Online Discussion Board Participation/Engagement: Please post a tip, strategy, or idea that specifically relates to targeting the most critical reading and math skills to help K-5 students succeed. 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

- Essential Writing Skills for Grades K-5
- The Reading and Writing Connection
- Strategies to Empower Students' Writing Skills
- **Test #4**

### Unit Five

- Mathematics Pathway: An Overview of Essential Skills
- Every Child a Mathematician: Embracing Math Practices
- Assessing Essential Mathematics Skills in Grades K-5
- **Test #5**

### Unit Six

- Problem Solving and Critical Thinking Progression
- Strategies to Empower Students' Mathematical Skills
- Integrating Reading and Math
- **Assignment #4**  
*Throughout this course, you have learned that teachers are shifting to sustainable learning, which involves removing unintended barriers to learning by “slowing down to speed up” and meeting students where they’re at. Considering all the information you*

*have learned from this course, design one literacy lesson plan and one mathematics lesson plan that empower sustainable learning and are applicable to the K-5 level. Each lesson plan must address a different essential foundational literacy or math skill, and must include an assessment of the chosen essential skill and a rubric for the assessment. Each lesson plan needs to include a purpose, a materials list (if necessary), and a minimum of six detailed steps to execute the procedure. In addition to addressing an essential skill, your lessons must include either a formative or summative assessment, as well as a rubric for the assessment you have designed. To obtain full credit, be sure to follow all the parameters set forth in Assignment 4.*

- **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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